

Palestinian support for peace dropping

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — A Palestinian survey of attitudes towards the peace process released Friday shows a marked drop in support for the agreement giving Palestinians autonomy in the Gaza Strip and West Bank region of Jericho. Of those surveyed, a little over 45 per cent support the poll indicated that almost 15 per cent had no opinion. The answers collected Thursday showed a marked change from a similar poll taken Sept. 23, immediately after the Israeli and the Palestinians signed the accord in Washington. Then, nearly 69 per cent supported the agreement, nearly 28 opposed it and over three per cent had no opinion. The 1,622 respondents interviewed were not asked to specify why they were for or against the accord. But violence and the delays in implementing the accord are usually cited by residents of the occupied territories. The poll, conducted by the privately-run Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre, had a margin of error of three per cent. Polling is a relatively recent phenomenon among the Palestinian population, which has been reluctant to air political opinions in public.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الرائي.

Bomb explosion in Tehran; 3 injured

NICOSIA (AP) — At least three people were injured in an explosion at a busy intersection in the centre of the Iranian capital, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported. The blast shook Ferdowsi Square at around 8:30 p.m. (1730 GMT) Thursday, "creating panic among the local residents and passersby," IRNA said. Windows shattered at a nearby bookstore and sandwich shop, and an IRNA reporter saw three injured pedestrians ferried away by ambulance. There were reports that two small bombs had been placed in a corner garbage can, according to the news agency. The circular intersection is located about 600 metres from the British and Russian embassies, and about one kilometre from the former American legation. It is normally one of the most crowded places in Tehran, but the IRNA dispatch said that because of the late hour businesses were shut and there were relatively few people on the street. IRNA claimed Mujahedeen-e-Khalq rebels telephoned from their office in Paris to claim responsibility for the blast. But the Mujahedeen denied the report.

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More rain forecast

AMMAN (J.T.) — More rain and thunderstorms are expected Saturday as a result of an air mass accompanying a depression now centred over Cyprus, according to the Meteorology Department. The department said a tangible drop in temperatures was expected with temperatures dropping down to four degrees centigrade in the hilly areas and 16 degrees in the Gulf of Aqaba. That heavy rain is expected in the eastern and southern regions of the Kingdom, which also witnessed the heaviest rainfall Friday. In Aqaba, it will be cloudy with thunderstorms and showers of rain.

Russia, U.S. urge peace in Mideast

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia and the United States appealed Friday for a "just and lasting" peace in the Middle East ahead of talks scheduled in Geneva between U.S. President Bill Clinton and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad. "The Russian Federation and the United States, recognising their special responsibility as co-sponsors of the Middle East peace process, reiterate their firm commitment to achieving the goal of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East," Mr. Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin said in a joint declaration issued at the end of summit talks here. The declaration also hailed progress achieved between Jordan and Israel in peace talks and voiced hope that Lebanon and Syria would yield "positive results" during their upcoming round of talks.

Duma elects hardliner as its speaker

MOSCOW (AFP) — Pro-communist legislator Ivan Ribkin was Friday elected speaker of Russia's lower house of parliament, the State Duma, the electoral commission said. Mr. Ribkin of the pro-communist Agrarian Party won 223 votes for with 111 deputies voting against, giving him the minimum number of votes required to win the speaker's chair in the 450-seat chamber. Six seats have not been filled in the new lower chamber of parliament. He easily defeated his ultra-nationalist challenger Yuri Vlasov, a former weightlifter-turned-writer, who garnered 23 votes for and 311 against. Around 80 deputies boycotted the vote.

Khartoum wants ceasefire in south

KHARTOUM (AFP) — A ceasefire between Sudanese government troops and southern rebels is needed for progress in a new round of peace talks according to Minister for Peace and Development Abdullah Deng Nyal. "A ceasefire is needed (positively) to affect the negotiations," he said on the initiative of four neighbouring countries. Mr. Deng Nyal said on Sudanese radio on his return from preliminary talks in Nairobi. "Everything is negotiable but for the unity of Sudan," Mr. Deng Nyal, a Muslim southerner said with regard to the peace initiative launched by Kenya, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda.

Clarke to resign if wrongdoing found

LONDON (AFP) — Chancellor of the Exchequer Kenneth Clarke has pledged to resign if an official inquiry concerning British arms sales to Iraq found him responsible for any wrongdoing. Mr. Clarke made the statement on British television. "I believe what I did was lawful I believe what I did was in the interests of justice. I believe that will be quite quickly established in the inquiry," he said, pledging to step down should the enquiry find otherwise. Mr. Clarke is under questioning in connection over official documents that were barred from release when he was British home secretary during the so-called Matrix-Churchill trial in 1992.

Ukraine signs accord to scrap all its nuclear arms

Trilateral deal crowns Clinton-Yeltsin summit; U.S., Russia to redirect missiles away from each other

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Russia and the United States claimed "victory" Friday with a treaty on Ukraine's nuclear disarmament and vowed to build a new strategic partnership under sweeping security and economic accords tailored to strengthen Russian reformers.

The presidents of the two former cold war rivals also ordered their armed forces to redirect long-range nuclear missiles away from each other's cities and pledged to work together to enhance security. "From Vancouver to Vladivostok."

"This is our great victory," Russian President Boris Yeltsin told U.S. President Bill Clinton after they were joined by Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk to sign a treaty under which Ukraine pledged to surrender all its nuclear weapons by the year 2001. The treaty, signed at the Kremlin by the three presidents, was the centerpiece of a two-day summit and marked a major diplomatic breakthrough for both the United States and Russia which feared the emergence of another nuclear power in Europe.

At a joint news conference following a series of formal signing ceremonies, both the U.S. and Russian leaders stressed that the treaty on Ukraine would augment global security and was in the interest of the Ukrainian people.

"I am fully satisfied," Mr. Clinton said. "I assure you I intend to maintain an intense personal involvement" in the three-way negotiations that produced the treaty.

President Kravchuk said he was satisfied with the deal. But the three-sided pact faces stiff opposition at home. Russia and Ukraine already appear to disagree on how much uranium Ukraine will get back from the deadly warheads dismantled under the pact.

Nationalist leader Vyacheslav Chornovil was quick to condemn the Moscow agreement, with accusations directed at Mr. Kravchuk. "Kravchuk's actions are treason," he told reporters in the Ukrainian capital Kiev. "It is shameful capitulation... the two superpowers, Russia and the United States, are joining forces to bring Ukraine to its knees."

Another Kravchuk opponent, pro-communist parliamentarian Alexander Moroz, said the Ukrainian parliament might veto the decision as damaging to Ukraine's national interests.

But Mr. Kravchuk, speaking at a Moscow news conference after signing the landmark deal, said parliament did not need to ratify the deal.

Under their agreement, Ukraine agrees to transfer at least 200 nuclear warheads to Russia within 10 months and turn over the rest of its nuclear stockpile "in the shortest possible time."

The White House released a statement giving details of the trilateral accord. To begin the process of compensating Ukraine for giving up nuclear weapons on its soil, Russia will provide Ukraine within 10 months with fuel assemblies for nuclear power stations containing 100 tonnes of low-enriched uranium.

"By the same date, at least 200 nuclear warheads from SS-19 and SS-24 missiles will be transferred from Ukraine to Russia for dismantling," the statement said.

The United States will provide \$60 million as an advance payment to Russia, to be deducted from payments due to Russia under a contract covering the reprocessing of highly enriched uranium taken from warheads from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

U.S. officials said the total value of uranium from all four countries, once it is converted into nuclear reaction fuel, is estimated at \$12 billion over 20 years, with Ukraine's share \$1 billion.

The \$1 billion the United States is providing will be repaid once the uranium is sold on the civilian reactor fuel market.

Ukrainian officials say they also expect the deal to pave the way for a \$1.5 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund and around \$700 million from the World Bank.

Mr. Clinton and Mr. Yeltsin also signed a "Moscow declaration" in which Russia confirmed its intention to build ties with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) under the U.S. "Partnership for Peace" initiative.

That plan opens the door for (Continued on page 10).

Five Palestinians and Israeli killed

HEBRON, occupied West Bank (Agencies) — Troops killed five Palestinians while an Israeli was stabbed to death in a flare up of violence in the occupied territories, military and Palestinian sources said Friday.

Soldiers shot dead four members of Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, after surrounding the house where they were holed up here on Thursday night.

In another incident, a Hamas member stabbed to death a recent Russian immigrant on the border of the Gaza Strip and wounded another Israeli on Friday before troops shot him dead.

The house at the centre of the fighting in Hebron lay burned out on Friday.

One of those who died was Abdul Salim Amin Shabana, leader for the Hebron region of Izzeddin Al Qassam, the armed wing of Hamas.

Shabana escaped with fellow militants from military prison on Nov. 12, an army spokesman said.

The security service Shin Beth found out where he was hiding when they captured two other fugitives earlier Thursday in the village of Idna, near Hebron.

Troops dispatched to the house came under fire, and one of them was slightly hurt.

The army's version of events was disputed by the house's owner, Tawfik Karamah, 31, who said he saw the whole operation.

"The house was rented to four engineering students from Hebron technical college," he said. "They were eating on the balcony when shooting broke out."

"They didn't fire a shot. But the soldiers who surrounded the house didn't hold back. An hour and a half later one of the occupants came out with his hands in the air and was shot dead by the soldiers."

Other neighbours said two tried to surrender, emerging from the house with their hands in the air about 90 minutes into the siege and were gunned down. Blood stained the dirt in front of the house.

The neighbours said the army turned night into day with flares and helicopters overhead.

"It was like they opened a warfront here," said Mohammad Ali Kawasmi, a neighbour.

A helicopter unleashed (Continued on page 10)

Jordan, PLO draft security agreement

AMMAN (R) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation PLO concluded a draft security accord with Jordan aimed at enhancing its negotiating position in stalled talks on an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho. Palestinian security officials said on Friday.

"We reached on Thursday a draft security accord which sets the principles of future coordination on issues of borders, training and exchange of security information with the Jordanians," said a senior PLO security official, engaged in the two days of talks of a joint committee on borders and security, which ended on Thursday.

He said the agreement "by laying the basis for future security coordination, aimed at enhancing the PLO's negotiating position with the Israelis, by coordinating our own side's positions."

Differences over control of border crossings between the Gaza Strip and Egypt and between Jericho and Jordan have delayed the pullout of Israeli troops originally planned for Dec. 13.

"It (the accord) will now be presented to the political leaderships of both sides for ratification," said the official, who asked not to be named.

The accord sets the basis for strong security cooperation during Palestinian self-rule in self-rule areas and Jordan. PLO security officials said.

The security committee is one of seven teams trying to define future links between Jordan and Palestinian self-rule areas.

The talks, the second since October, were co-chaired by Major Fakhri Shaqoura, head of the PLO's military intelligence, and Jordan's Abdullah Toukan, an adviser to King Hussein. No date has been set for the next meeting.

"We agreed on the principles... and the followup talks will define the right mechanisms for enhancing this long term security coordination," another PLO security official added.

PLO officials told Reuters the two-day talks reviewed the training programme of over 2,000 Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) members.

They are expected to police areas to be turned over to Israel for Palestinian self-rule, but their entry schedule has been upset by the delay in implementing the accord.

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U.S. President Bill Clinton, Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk join hands Friday after signing a nuclear disarmament agreement (AFP photo)

King, Clinton meet on Friday to review peace talks, ties

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein is scheduled to meet with U.S. President Bill Clinton on Jan. 21 for talks on issues ranging from the Middle East peace process to American-Jordanian relations, officials here and in Washington said. The King, who left for London last week for a short stay in Britain, is expected to head for Rochester, Minnesota, soon for medical check-ups at the Mayo Clinic. Following the check-up, the King will spend a few days in the state of Colorado on a private visit before proceeding to Washington to meet Mr. Clinton.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and several members of his Cabinet are expected to head for Washington this week to join the King in his talks with Mr. Clinton.

It will be the second White House meeting between the King and Mr. Clinton. The two leaders met first in June.

Among the issues that are expected to be discussed between the King and President Clinton are the course of the peace process, U.S.-Jordan economic cooperation and military ties, officials said.

The King will brief the president on the progress of negotiations between Jordan and Israel, and reiterate that there cannot be any signing of a peace agreement separate from an overall accord addressing all the four tracks of the Arab-Israeli negotiations launched in Madrid in October 1991.

All indications are that Sunday's summit in Geneva between President Clinton and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad could produce a major breakthrough to lift the logjam in the Syrian-Israeli track of negotiations, and, by extension, advance the Lebanese-Israeli peace talks.

As such, analysts say, the King's meeting with President Clinton comes at a crucial stage in the quest for peace in the Middle East in that he would have known by then the result of the U.S.-Syrian summit by Jan. 21 and could formulate Jordan's next steps accordingly.

King Hussein is in touch with President Assad over the phone on Thursday. Reports from Damascus said the two leaders exchanged views on the current moves in the peace process and means to advance the Arab-Israeli negotiations.

In the meantime, it was reported from Washington that the next round of Arab-Israeli peace talks would begin there on Jan. 24 (see separate story).

On the bilateral front, the (Continued on page 5)

Bilaterals resume on January 24

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Arab-Israeli peace talks are expected to resume in Washington Jan. 24 although the United States has yet to issue formal invitations. U.S. officials and Middle East diplomats said Thursday.

The United States is anxious to renew the peace process and expects to generate new momentum from President Bill Clinton's meeting Sunday with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad in Geneva.

The talks beginning Jan. 24 will be between the heads of the Syrian, Lebanese, Jordanian and Palestinian delegations and their Israeli counterparts.

State department spokeswoman Christine Shelly said Israeli-Palestinian talks would take place in Washington, even though these parties are also involved in intense negotiations in the Middle East aimed at implementing an accord they signed last September.

She said the talks would begin in the second half of January but the exact date was still not set and formal invitations had not been sent out.

"We've said before... the talks are going to start again in the second half of January and that is still certainly very much the timeframe," she said. "No formal invitations to the parties have gone out that also identify the date."

Last week, Ambassador Dennis Ross, the U.S. coordinator for the Middle East peace negotiations, and members of the U.S. peace team met with the heads of the Syrian and Lebanese delegations in

House votes today on '94 draft budget

By Suhair Obeidat
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament is expected today to endorse the 1994 draft budget following a four-day session during which a total of 70 deputies would have taken the floor to alternately criticise and praise the budget.

Before taking a vote on the JD 1.487 billion draft budget, the House will listen to the government's answer to the lawmakers' reports and demands, which mainly included requests for reduction in current expenditure and more services in their constituencies.

According to the Constitution, the lawmakers cannot ask for an increase to the expenditure but could seek the shifting of some allocations to other items.

During Thursday's session 22 deputies delivered speeches. The general atmosphere was relaxed and sometimes even monotonous with redundant remarks and lengthy speeches.

Although some deputies announced they were speaking on behalf of other colleagues, like the case of Karak Deputy Abdul Hadi Majali who said he was representing the National Action Front with 17 members, those included in the list took the floor individually, to express their opinion on the budget.

Deputy Aref Batayneh (Irbid) also said he co-drafted his speech with the other 18 deputies representing the governorate.

Some deputies reiterated the claim of others who spoke on Tuesday and Wednesday that the draft budget was not "deficit-free" as Minister of Finance Sami Gammoh termed

Islamic Action Front (IAF) deputy Bassam 'Emoush asserted that the draft budget was "misleading," among other things, "because one-third of the budget is grants and loans from an unidentified source."

Mr. 'Emoush requested that the telephones of deputies be considered "official," i.e. exempt from fees, "because they are for the general interest and that of the citizens."

Mr. 'Emoush said that the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) and Royal Jordan, the national carrier, "should be kept under the government's control and not be given to the private sector and their files should be investigated for cases of corruption and stealing."

Mr. 'Emoush requested that the renovation of the Saladin pulpit in Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem should be stopped and the "money allocated for this purpose be channelled to support people in the occupied territories."

Toujan Faisal (Amman), said the draft budget reflects the "government's political rather than economic policies, in view of the purely political circumstances which prevailed when it was drafted."

Ms. Faisal said that the government's estimates of poverty and unemployment are "untrue... and are a clear indication of purposeful cover-ups."

Mafraq Deputy Mohammad Abu Aleem said that the budget should have taken into consideration the peace process and political developments "which will cause important changes in the economies of all countries in the region."

Dr. Abu Aleem said that the (Continued on page 5)

Holst to be laid to rest on Jan. 22

By Kathrine Rath in Oslo with agency dispatches

FOREIGN MINISTER Johan Joergen Holst, who died after suffering a stroke on Thursday, will be buried on Jan. 22, the foreign ministry said Friday.

Political leaders from several countries will be present, the ministry said without giving any names.

Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) representative in Norway Omar Kitmitto confirmed that PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat will come to Oslo to attend the funeral.

Norwegian media have said Mr. Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, both personal friends of Mr. Holst, have expressed a wish to attend.

Among the many tributes to Mr. Holst was one on Friday from Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa who said he was "sorry and saddened" by his death.

Mr. Holst, 56, died from an apparent stroke in hospital on Thursday. Doctors had believed his condition was improving after an earlier stroke in December.

Norway hosted at least 14 secret meetings between Israel and the PLO last year to pave the way for their accord on limited Palestinian autonomy in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho.

Mr. Holst died peacefully in his bed at rehabilitation centre outside Oslo, early Thursday morning.

He had been hospitalised a few days before Christmas after having suffered a heart attack. He was believed to be on his way to recovery and was himself optimistic about the future when he suffered a new stroke.

Mr. Holst will be remembered for his extraordinary efforts to bring peace to the conflict-ridden Middle East. Through secret meetings in Oslo and Paris and, later, through shuttle diplomacy in the region, he led the negotiations which resulted in the historic peace treaty between the Palestinians and the Israelis, signed on Sept. 13 in Washington.

In an interview given to the Norwegian press in September, shortly before the signing of the accord, Mr. Holst expressed his strong feelings for the task he was performing as mediator. He said that he felt a sense of humbleness and a gratitude for being part of such path-breaking events.

But it was evident that the long and strenuous working-days filled with numerous meetings and frequent travelling were beginning to take its toll on the foreign minister, who was also busy performing his normal day-to-day duties. Many weeks had passed since



Johan Joergen Holst

(Continued on page 10)

Lebanon could be big loser from peace, Khaddam says

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Lebanon could be the big loser in the race for economic domination of the Middle East once peace is established with Israel, Syrian Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam said in remarks quoted by Lebanese newspaper Friday.

The vice-president told members of Beirut Chamber of Commerce and Industry that Lebanon was best placed to challenge Israel for regional economic supremacy in peacetime.

But it was likely to lose the contest because Western interests favoured Israel, he said.

"In the event of peace in the region Israel will try to establish its hegemony over economic and tourism resources and other resources," Mr. Khaddam told a chamber of commerce delegation that visited Damascus Thursday.

"The Arab World will become a market where Israel, the concessionaire of big international firms, will dispose of its products," he said.

The big loser could be Lebanon and those who hold large amounts of capital, because Lebanon is the country best placed to compete with Israel.

Some Lebanese officials also foresee economic rivalry with Israel but say a peace settlement will substantially boost investment in Lebanon, speed its post-war recovery and help it regain its role as a major Middle East financial and recreational centre.

Mr. Khaddam said Lebanon could recover rapidly due to the people's adaptability and experience. But he came close to accusing Israel of trying to sabotage this recovery because of the economic challenge Lebanon represented.

"That is why there are attempts to create tension in Lebanon and these attacks cannot be separated from this context," said Mr. Khaddam. "The recent attacks... all definitely serve Israel's interests."

A car-bomb last month — Lebanon's first in two years — wrecked the headquarters of the Falangist Party in Beirut, killing three people and wounding 130. There has also been a series of arson attacks on liquor stores in two other cities.

Mr. Khaddam said that if Arab countries had worked on forming a common market, they would have achieved the unity to confront Israel.

"The problem of we Arab



Abdul Halim Khaddam

countries is that we each behave as if we are 'the great power,' he said.

Syria and Lebanon have signed a series of economic cooperation agreements and are aiming for the formation of a common market with Jordan.

"If Lebanon and Syria achieve this, it would only be a modest affair, but I am sure it would serve the interests of the two countries as well as of all Arab countries, and we are open to all ideas in this direction," Mr. Khaddam said.

Israel meanwhile urged Syria to use the summit with President Bill Clinton next week to prove its readiness for peace and allow for a breakthrough in stalled negotiations.

Talks between Israel and Syria broke down last year with Damascus insisting that Israel withdraw from the Golan Heights as a prerequisite to peace and Israel demanding Syria outline peace terms before territory was negotiated.

Israel has said it is prepared to partially withdraw from the strategic Golan Heights.

"If the Syrians do come and show that they are ready for full peace... there is no doubt that we will have to draw conclusions vis-a-vis the Golan Heights," Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said on army radio.

"But all this we will be able to discuss only when the Syrians come with clear answers to four subjects: The character of the negotiations, the dimension of the peace, the nature of the security and a settlement in Lebanon," Mr. Peres added.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin sent a similar message last week to President Hafez Al Assad, who is to meet with Mr. Clinton on Sunday, Jan. 16 in Geneva, Switzerland.

The new U.S. ambassador to Israel, Edward P. Djerejian,

said the summit's results would hopefully stimulate the stalled Syrian-Israeli peace talks.

"It is our intent and our hope... that this meeting will provide a substantive basis to move the negotiations forward," Mr. Djerejian said after presenting his credentials to President Ezer Weizman.

He added that immediately following the Clinton-Assad meeting, The United States would brief Israeli leaders.

Mr. Peres also urged Syria to agree to a more quiet channel for the peace talks.

"The negotiations cannot be limited to one narrow channel full of microphones, that actually becomes a pointless debate. The negotiations must be open, include higher ranks and quieter channels, so that we will really be able to take off from the present point," Mr. Peres said on Israeli Radio.

Syria has so far publicly refused meetings outside the Washington venue. Talks between the heads of the Israeli, Palestinian, Lebanese, Syrian and Jordanian delegations are to resume in Washington Jan. 24, sources there said Wednesday.

Mr. Rubin has voiced skepticism that Sunday's summit will result in a change in Syria's attitude to Israel.

"I don't expect Syria to soften its position and reduce the price it is demanding in exchange for peace," Mr. Rubin told a Labour Party meeting late Thursday in Tel Aviv.

Christian churches in Syria held special prayers on Friday for the success of the summit. Worshippers prayed for the talks to bring a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, church officials said.

Lebanese President Elias Hrawi saw Friday President Assad will voice all Arab demands, especially Lebanon's, in his meeting with U.S. Clinton in Geneva.

"President Assad is not going to Geneva to negotiate and defend the Golan. He is going to defend all the Arab causes and at their forefront Lebanon before Syria," Mr. Hrawi told members of the Lebanese Journalists' Union.

"Let that be certain... he will defend all the Arab rights," added Mr. Hrawi.

Beirut closely coordinates its Middle East peace moves with Damascus, whose 35,000 soldiers deployed over two-thirds of Lebanon make it the country's main foreign power broker.



'BATTLEFRONT': A Palestinian boy passes by a demolished house in Hebron which was destroyed during a siege by Israeli soldiers leading to the killing of four Palestinians (see story on page 1)

Prospect of revived bloody chaos pushes Somalis to seek peace

By Julian Bedford
Reuter

MOGADISHU — After three years of civil war, many Somalis yearn for a government — any government.

With their country devastated, hundreds of thousands of people killed or maimed and more than one million turned into refugees, the prospect of more fighting is pushing the country's leaders into a serious search for a negotiated peace.

Ali Mahdi Mohammad, self-styled president of the Horn of Africa country, told Reuters: "People are telling me they would prefer a loose or corrupt government to no government at all."

He said his supporters in the so-called "group of 12" political organisations were ready to talk and compromise with the four factions of powerful clan leader Mohammed Farah Aided's Somali National Alliance (SNA).

Somalis' minds have been focused by fears of renewed civil war after U.S. troops, the backbone of the U.N. force in the country, leave for good on March 31.

The Italians and French have already gone. Other West European countries respected, if not liked, by Somalis for their professionalism plan to be out at or before the same date.

On street corners and market places, Somalis now animatedly debate future possibilities. Some even say the dicta-

torships of old were not so bad. "People just want some stability, security," said Abdi, a driver with a humanitarian organisation.

Somalia has been without a government since rebels, mainly loyal to Mr. Ali Mahdi or his main rival Aided, toppled dictator Mohammed Siad Barre in 1991.

They and other rival warlords then turned their guns on each other, fuelling a famine which killed 300,000 people. The famine brought first the humanitarian aid agencies and then a United Nations task force in an international mission to end both starvation and war.

Analysts say the rival factions need now to understand they could lose popular support if they return to fighting once U.S. and other Western forces leave Somalia.

This has brought a new urgency to the search for a brokered peace, strengthening the hand of those who argue that Somalis should be left alone to find "a Somali solution."

Mohammad Sheikh Ollio "Dos," secretary for external affairs for the Somali Patriotic Movement, one of the factions in the group of 12, said: "The G12 have combined to act together and they are continuing the dialogue with Aided."

The United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) and the international commun-

ity general tried — and failed — to bring the two sides together, most recently at talks in Addis Ababa.

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) has asked Kenya, Eritrea, Uganda, Ethiopia and Sudan to seek a peaceful solution. Diplomats say their discussions in Nairobi appear to be producing positive results.

Issa Mohammad Siad, SNA secretary for external affairs, told Reuters: "It is my belief that the problems of Somalia will be solved in Nairobi and solved soon."

On another level, the imam of Hirab, a respected religious leader also known as the imam of Abgal, is using traditional Somali means to find peace between Mr. Ali Mahdi's Abgal clan and Gen. Aided's Habr Gedir.

The imam has no political aspirations and is not seen as a rival by the warlords. That gives him a potential edge in a country where suspicion is invariably stronger than trust.

His non-political talks seek to end clan rather than factional disputes. They centre on the basics of Somali life — problems of shared wells, grazing rights, blood feuds.

Experts on Somalia say these talks are just as important as the political discussions. They say a political agreement between Gen. Aided and Mr. Ali Mahdi could prove short-lived if there is no peace between the clans.

Iraq restates rejection of one-time oil export

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Iraq reiterated its refusal of a U.N. plan to allow a one-time, \$1.6 billion oil sale to raise money for badly needed aid, saying Thursday that the deal would violate Iraq's sovereignty.

Iraqi diplomats also accused the United States of blocking any U.N. move to lift a U.N. oil embargo on Iraq. They said Iraq had made progress in meeting U.N. conditions for lifting the embargo.

In a statement Thursday, Iraq repeated that 400,000 people have died since the imposition of oil and other trade sanctions in August 1990.

The claim could not be confirmed, but humanitarian organisations say that lack of food, medicine and supplies has caused widespread suffering, malnutrition and many deaths.

The Security Council is to review the total trade embargo against Iraq next week. But U.N. diplomats privately predict the embargo will remain in place for at least another six months.

The Iraqi diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity, repeated Baghdad's refusal to discuss a small, one-time oil sale.

They told the Associated Press that strict U.N. supervision of the oil sale and distribution of food and supplies would be an unacceptable violation of Iraq's sovereignty. Iraq has made similar arguments in the past.

The diplomats also said

Iraq's deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz, would not visit New York this month, as had been expected. Instead, Iraq seeks a meeting in Baghdad in late January or February with U.N. weapons experts to discuss terms for lifting the oil embargo, they said.

The diplomats said Iraq still does not know exactly what U.N. weapons officials want before they will certify to the Security Council that Iraq has satisfied terms of the ceasefire.

The council imposed a total trade embargo, including oil, after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990. But the council's ceasefire resolution says the oil embargo may be lifted after Iraq satisfies certain weapons-related conditions.

Before the council can lift the oil embargo, U.N. weapons experts must certify they believe Iraq has dismantled its prohibited nuclear, chemical, biological and ballistic weapons programme, and destroyed prohibited weapons and equipment. Experts also must certify they are satisfied with Iraq's compliance in long-term monitoring of military industries to ensure Iraq does not require the arms.

The United States and Britain have resisted any public recognition by the council of Iraq's cooperation. In a statement Thursday, Iraq called the sanctions unjustified and said the United States and Britain were trying "again to impose their own political view on the decision of the council."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cyprus holds a granny on kidnap charge

NICOSIA (R) — A court in Cyprus has remanded a Norwegian grandmother in custody on suspicion of kidnapping her seven-year-old grandson. Police said that Helen Solem Blywnt, 50, would appear in court in the coastal resort of Larnaca to answer the charge following a request from the Norwegian government. The case is being brought by Ms. Blywnt's former son-in-law, the boy's father. Police said Ms. Blywnt and her grandson, Kim, had been living in Cyprus since last year.

Pakistan to compensate Turkish firm

ANKARA (R) — Pakistan offered Turkish Bayindir Holding, a new project of up to \$150 million or compensation on Thursday to offset losses from the cancellation of a motorway project. Anatolian news agency said. "They have brought some offers like a new project worth \$100 to \$150 million." Turkish State Minister Nazif Kurt told the agency after talks with a delegation headed by Pakistani State Minister Shahid Hassan Khan in Ankara. Mr. Kurt said Pakistan was ready to compensate Bayindir's loss unless the company accepted the new offers. Pakistan abandoned last month the \$644 million project to build a motorway from Islamabad to Peshawar. Mr. Kurt said Turkey sought continuation of the project with Bayindir. "I think Pakistan will consider this," he added. He said Bayindir was likely to ask for compensation instead of undertaking a new project.

Tunisian jailed for murder, rape

TUNIS (AFP) — A Tunis court handed out prison sentences totalling 30 years to a young Tunisian convicted of killing a Swedish woman and raping another in Stockholm four years ago, the press reported. Mohamed Al Aid Rebaieyeh was sentenced Tuesday to 20 years in prison for strangling Nina Eliasson, 22, in August 1989, and to a further 10 years for raping another woman, whose name was not given in court, the same year. He attacked the first woman after she had attempted to throw him out of her apartment, the prosecution said. The second woman was attacked as she was walking in the street after nightfall. Rebaieyeh fled Sweden, where he had gone looking for work, some time after committing his crimes. Tunisia and Sweden are not bound by an extradition treaty. Relatives of both women were present at the trial.

Gunmen kill 3 policemen in Egypt

ASSIUT, Egypt (R) — Militants shot dead three policemen at a traffic checkpoint in southern Egypt on Thursday then fled in a car they seized at gunpoint, security sources said. The gunmen struck near the town of Al Qusiya, 300 kilometres south of Cairo, in Assiut province, pumping 31 bullets into one of their victims, the sources said. Police suspected the militant Al Gama'a Al Islamiyah (Islamic Group) of carrying out the attack. The sources said the gunmen attacked the checkpoint on the main road north to Cairo at 2:15 p.m. (12:15 GMT). Two of the policemen were killed instantly and the third died in hospital. The gunmen took two rifles and a pistol from the dead men. Police searched for the attackers but made no arrests.

Syria looks at Assad-Clinton summit with optimism

By Issam Hamza
Reuter

DAMASCUS — Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, backed by powerful Arab oil states, heads for a summit with U.S. President Bill Clinton optimistic of a breakthrough in peace talks with Israel, officials and analysts say.

For the first time Monday, Syria joined seven other Arab states, including pro-Western Saudi Arabia and Egypt, in terming September's Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) deal for limited Palestinian autonomy in the occupied territories as the first step on the path to peace.

The upbeat mood was reflected in a statement by Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa who told the Arab ministers in Damascus that Syria expected im-

portant results from the summit that would reflect positively on the whole region.

"The summit should bear important results as we hope," Mr. Sharaa said during the meeting which expressed full support for Mr. Assad at the talks with Mr. Clinton.

Syria had previously criticised the PLO's peace deal with Israel and has had its own problems in trying to achieve its demands in negotiations with the Jewish state. Damascus held 11 rounds of talks with Israel as part of the U.S.-led by peace talks without achieving tangible results.

It threatened to boycott the next round but agreed during a visit by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to go back to the negotiating table.

Officials and the analysts say Mr. Assad's main con-

cern will be to get Mr. Clinton's backing for the return of the Golan Heights, a strategic plateau occupied by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war.

Mr. Assad will also back demands by his ally and neighbour, Lebanon, for Israel to get out of the southern part of the country, and will insist on the need for a comprehensive, not piecemeal, solution to the 45-year-old Arab-Israeli conflict.

"Syria believes that lasting peace and stability in the region cannot be achieved without a comprehensive settlement, without a comprehensive settlement. Practical examples prove this fact," one Syrian official said.

"Assad offered Israel full peace in return for its full withdrawal from the Golan, and the meeting with Clinton

will be an opportunity to explain what that full peace will mean, when he gets assurances of Israeli withdrawal," one analyst said.

Israeli leaders, in exchange for withdrawal, wants Syria first to commit itself to full normalisation of ties, including establishment of diplomatic links, trade cooperation and open border.

Syria's readiness to recognise Israel explicitly and to establish diplomatic ties has never been clarified publicly although Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam said in remarks earlier this month that the issue of future ties was an issue for negotiations.

The official media in Syria, reflecting optimism about the summit, said Mr. Clinton would not have arranged the meeting had he nothing new to offer to Syria to achieve a breakthrough.

Mr. Assad has made sever-

al goodwill gestures ahead of the summit, including help to a U.S. team seeking information on Israeli servicemen who went missing in 1982 in Lebanon, where Syria is the main powerbroker.

The president also ordered that Syrian Jews wanting to emigrate get their visas more quickly. More than 500 of some 850 still in Syria have received visas. The remainder are due get theirs this week.

One shadow over U.S.-Syrian relations is the presence in Syria of Palestinian guerrilla groups whom the United States views as "terrorists" and who oppose the Middle East peace process.

Syria says they are resistance fighters battling occupation of their land by Israel. Washington has also urged Damascus to curb the groups' rejection of the PLO-Israeli peace deal. Damascus told



Hafez Al Assad

the Americans that these groups should be viewed as an opposition like the Israeli opposition which is much stronger.

JORDAN TELEVISION

PROGRAMME TWO
17:30 Les Aventures De L'Espace
17:41 L'Ecole Des Fous
18:30 Beaumarchais
19:00 News in French
19:15 Ushuaia
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 The Family Boys
21:00 Talk Show
21:30 The Campbells
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature Film: "Relentless/Mind of a Killer"

PRAYER TIMES

05:11 Fajr
06:32 Sunrise
11:44 Dhuhr
14:33 Asr
16:56 Maghrib
18:18 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624591
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 627440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 62851, Tel. 62642
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 625226
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 625226
St. Nasser (Protestant) Church Tel. 625226
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 641195
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 623624, 624932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 625691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be cold and cloudy with rain (or at intervals) and winds will be westerly moderate to Agtha, partly cloudy weather conditions will prevail with a chance of occasional showers. Winds will be southerly active and squally.
Amman Min./Max. temp. 4/9
Agtha 9/15

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Deserts 3-11
Jordan Valley 10/17

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 12, Agtha 17. Humidity readings: Amman 90 per cent, Agtha 95 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Nidal Al Malsin 751672
Dr. Hanna Mansour 750197
Dr. Mukhlis Mazharah 828425
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 831029
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 670336
Al Ascenta pharmacy 670855
Naimkha pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsan pharmacy 637661
Haji pharmacy 647632
JRBID:
Dr. Mohammad Al Hilo 270773
Al Quds Pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Mishal Hijawi 981217
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Fire Brigade 801228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 806301
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 805881
Prison Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 807447
Complaints 807447
Amman Municipality 787111
Complaints 807447
Telephone Information (directors assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010270
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111

Radin Jordan 774111
Waft Authority 600100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Company 624412
Economic Power 624412
RJ Flight Information 08-53230
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53241

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre 81301332
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn. 64428116
Jalal Maternity, J. Amn. 64244122
Jalal Maternity, J. Amn. 64244122
Mishra, J. Amman 626140
Palestine Shmiciani 66117114
Shamsan Hospital 669131
University Hospital 66227779
Al-Musharrah Hospital 66127757
The Islamic, Abdali 66117114
Al-Ahli, Abdali 66117114
Italian, Al-Musharrah 7771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ahrufah 77511126
Army, Marka 88161115
Queen Alia Hospital 66224090
Amal Hospital 66117114
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital 010993323
Zarqa National Hospital 010993323
Ibn Sina Hospital 010996752

Al Hana Modern Hospital 04199990
DEBID:
Princess Basma Hospital 010275555
Greek Catholic Hospital 010272275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital 0102747100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital 0103141111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information Department at the Queen Alia International Airport. Tel. 010152005, where it should always be verified.
ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
05:30 Jeddah, Singapore (RJ)
09:25 London, New Delhi (RJ)
09:25 Agtha (RJ)
09:30 Dhahran (RJ)
05:30 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
08:00 Beirut (RJ)
08:00 Agtha (RJ)
10:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:25 Paris, Brussels (RJ)
11:45 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:05 London (RJ)
20:00 Cairo (RJ)
20:15 Larnaca (RJ)
20:30 Bahrain (RJ)
20:45 Jeddah (RJ)
21:30 Damascus, Dubai (RJ)
21:30 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

HUAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 8:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fil per kg.
Apple 750/400
Banana 680
Banana (Mammar) 620
Beans 480/380
Cabbage 60/30
Carrot 70/40
Cauliflower 70/40
Cucumber 270/200
Cucumbers (large) 100/160
Cucumbers (small) 220/150
Eggplant 180/160
Garlic 900/600
Grape Fruit 170/100
Lemon 70/40
Marrow (large) 160/100
Marrow (small) 140/90
Olives (green) 700/500
Orange 380/100
Onion (dry) 360/240
Onion (green) 250/120
Pepper (hot) 260/200
Pepper (sweet) 260/200
Potato 250/180
Tomato 100/50
Zucchini 160/90
Spinach 120/80

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

11:30 Samia (RJ)
11:40 London (RJ)
13:30 Agtha (RJ)
18:35 Jeddah (RJ)
19:45 Dubai (RJ)

Sqour says role of the family to be highlighted this year

AMMAN (Petra) — In observance of 1994 as the International Year of the Family, as called for by the United Nations General Assembly, Jordan will this year organise and carry out a number of functions and activities designed to highlight the role of the family in the Jordanian society.

The announcement was made here by Social Development Minister Mohammad Sqour, who noted that the dedication of the year to the family was aimed at increasing awareness among the public about family issues and to underline the importance of family links with socio-economic and demographic developments in society.

Declaring that Jordan has joined the world nations in observing the International Day of the Family, the minister told a press conference that this year there will be an encouragement of various social institutions caring for the family affairs to promote family activities and to benefit from various international experiences pertaining to women, children, the youth, the aged and the handicapped persons.

"The dedication is also meant to improve and highlight cooperation among various governments and international organisations towards promoting the activities of families and their members," said Dr. Sqour.

His Majesty King Hussein announced Tuesday that Jordan would be observing 1994 as the International Year of the Family noting that the family constitutes the basic unit of the Jordanian society.

Formally inaugurating the International Year of the Family in Jordan, the King



Social Development Minister Mohammad Sqour (wearing glasses at the head of the table) listens to a question from a journalist during a

press conference the minister held Thursday (Petra photo)

noted that the Kingdom has been keen on implementing Arab and international covenants and on providing the appropriate legislative and administrative guarantees which contribute to the advancement of the family.

At his press conference, Dr. Sqour referred the King's message as "providing guidelines for the government" and noted that activities during the year would be implemented with the help of the National Committee on Women's Affairs which was set up two months ago.

The committee's main concern, the minister noted, was to spread awareness about family issues among the public concerning social, economic and demographic questions in the country.

In observance of the year 1994 as the International Year of the Family, the committee is planning a cultural festival with a number of activities and programmes, which would involve school children, cultural centres and other sectors, during which a number of productive families and a number of organisations concerned about family affairs would be honoured, the minister announced.

Furthermore, the national committee is planning a general exhibition displaying products by limited-income families with the purpose of supporting such projects that provide the needy families with additional income, Dr. Sqour said.

In his address last Tuesday, the King said the government

and the private sector organisations ought to work out national policies and programmes aimed at mobilising the potentials of the youth to enable them to shoulder responsibilities and embark on productive and creative work.

Special attention, said the King, should be given to the handicapped members of society.

Noting that attention continues to be directed to the needy families and the handicapped, the minister told the press conference that the Ministry of Social Development will continue to enhance its programmes directed at alleviating the plight of the needy families and would continue to the drive to provide services to the handicapped children.

Today is Arbor Day

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The first step towards the establishment of the Al Hussein National Park, near Abu Alanda, south east of Amman, starts today with the planting of thousands of trees in the course of the annual Arbor Day celebrations in the Kingdom.

The Ministry of Agriculture and the Municipality of Greater Amman have prepared the site, called Wadi Al Qattar — a district near Abu Alanda, for this year's main tree-planting celebration.

The park, which is 1247 dunums in area, will be planted with at least 100,000 trees.

Greater Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi told the Jordan Times that, in the course of preparations for the celebration and through digging holes for the trees, a main spring was discovered in December sufficing the needs of the drip irrigation system in the whole park and saving the municipality the



Fertile hills and valleys that stretch in a narrow belt through the heart of the Kingdom

cost of bringing water by truck to irrigate the trees.

He said the main celebration at Wadi Al Qattar would be held under the Royal patronage and thousands of people were expected to plant trees in the new park.

The Ministry of Agriculture noted on the eve of the anniversary, that has set up 12 stations to produce forest saplings and fruit trees and has built 12 towers to control fires in various forest areas. The ministry has also assigned fire fighting teams to move speedily to deal with any fire which, the ministry said, has been causing a great loss to the country in recent years.

Noting that the efforts to green the Kingdom date back to the 1920s, the ministry said

that nearly 80 per cent of the total area of the country was desert land and only one per cent of the area was covered by forests, despite continued efforts over the years.

In a drive to involve private sector organisations to contribute to the greening of the country, the ministry has reached agreements in the past two years with 20 local firms to undertake the process of planting trees in about 100 plots of lands within the Amman and the Balqa governorates, noted the statement.

Most of the tree planting projects were taking place on state owned lands and on the hills overlooking the Jordan Valley and along areas considered as essential to halt desertification and the encroach-

ment of the desert from the east.

Noting that afforestation programmes started originally with trees planted on 500 to 1000 dunums a year, the statement said that the figure rose to 15,000 dunums in the 1960s and 30,000 dunums in the 1970s.

So far, forest trees have been grown on 353,000 dunums through the efforts of the Ministry of Agriculture, it noted.

According to ministry statistics, fruit trees in Jordan now amount to one million which produced 361,000 tonnes of fruit in 1992.

According to the statistics, Jordan has 10 million dunums of pasture land which are used for grazing.

Amman 3/1/1994

Warning sent through the Notary Public at Amman

Warner: Al-Quds Open University, represented by its attorney Advocate Massoud Khalifeh, Amman.

Addressee: Al-Quds Open University, United States of America, represented by Dr. Ahmad Jamal El Tamimi/ unknown domicile at Amman; last address of his domicile, Al-Quds Open University, Um El-Sumaq, behind Mecca Street/Amman.

Subject of the Warning

You are aware that on 3/10/1993 you have signed a cooperation agreement between you in your personal capacity, and in your capacity as representative of Al-Quds Open University in the United States of America, registered by the Notary public at Passaic county on 3/6/1993 according to the contents of the registration certificate presented by you, and between Al-Quds Open University represented by: Dr. Munther Salah its president at the time, provided that cooperation shall be effected by the use of distance learning methods adopted by the open universities and colleges in the USA according to the conditions mentioned in the Agreement.

As you have violated many conditions mentioned in the Agreement and as you did not abide to the terms of this agreement, the warner, therefore states herbelow all the violations which you have committed and did not comply with the provisions of this agreement. The violations are as follows:

- Firstly:** Non-observance of the contents of paragraph (11-a) of the first supplement of the agreement which provides that the second party (the addressee) shall pay the first installment of (100) one hundred thousand dollars within forty five days from signature of the agreement. In spite of the expiration of the period, you have failed to pay the amount required from and due on you.
- Secondly:** You have contravened this agreement by printing visiting cards indicating that there is a regional office for the university at Amman, Jordan, and have distributed these cards without obtaining the warner's consent because this action constitutes a clear infringement upon the agreement concluded with you. Such an act led people to believe that there is possibility for accepting and registering students in Jordan. The addressee however is not entitled to do so.
- Thirdly:** You have issued leaflets without obtaining the approval of the warner on that. Also you have intentionally, printed inaccurate information, and your relation with the warner on these leaflets. Also you did not provide these leaflets with information denoting that the original philosophy of the university emanated from Al-Quds Open University and not from the American University as mentioned in the leaflet. In addition to the fact that you are not entitled to print anything in Jordan relating to the printed publications agreed upon under the Agreement.
- Fourthly:** You have printed many study curricula in Jordan without any legitimate right and without obtaining the approval of the warner on that. Also you have cancelled the university's logo and removed it from covers of the study curricula which you have redesigned, reprinted and recopied without the prior consent of the warner.
- Fifthly:** You have violated the agreement because you have submitted an application to the Ministry of the Higher Education in which you requested a permit for the American University and an approval for authorising it to exercise university activities in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan without notifying the warner or obtaining its approval on that.
- Sixthly:** You have printed a great number of the University Curricula in Jordan without being granted this right in accordance with the agreement. You have omitted the license granted by the Publication Department as well as the serial numbers and rights of the composer (Al-Quds Open University) and you have printed a large number of the curricula without signing them by the American Congress Library which constitutes a clear violation of paragraph (1) of Supplement No. (1).
- Seventhly:** Your non-observance of the request of the University to ensure the availability of a representative as a liaison officer in Jordan to get in touch with him and to follow up the implementation of the terms of this agreement with the warner, who will be holding an official power of attorney from an official authority.
- Eighthly:** The University has sustained, as a result of his observing the obligation mentioned in this agreement, the following losses and damages:

They are by way of example and not limitation as follows:

1. The warner has been harmed by your non-payment of the financial undertaking of the first payment as per the agreement, amounting to (100) one hundred thousand U.S. dollars which was due on 18/11/1993.
2. The warner sustained financial losses by the non-payment of the addressee the amount for copying the supporting educational methods which he ordered and received.
3. The warner sustained also a great deal of moral losses as a result of the following:
 - a. What has been published in the Jordanian newspapers (Al Rai), regarding the sale of the University to the private sector and the denial, and consequently the negative and contrary effect upon those dealing with the university such as students, assistant professors and the like.
 - b. The news published in the Jordan Times on 16/12/1993 in respect of sale of the university.
 - c. Causing the inability of signing an agreement with the Razi Institute in the United Arab Emirates due to what had been published in the newspapers there about the sale of the university to the private sector which affected the warner materially and morally and weakened the confidence of others in the university.
 - d. We estimate the material and moral damages caused to the warner, Al-Quds Open University, by a sum not less than ten million U.S. dollars.

The Request:

For these reasons, and due to the violations explained in this warning, the warner calls upon you, and within fifteen days from the date of serving this warning on you, to immediately abide by the terms of this agreement and to abstain from carrying out these acts which cause material and moral damages to the warner, and to immediately pay and fulfill all the financial obligations falling due on you within the period specified in this warning and to refrain from the continuous violations of the terms of the agreement, otherwise, the warner shall, unfortunately, be compelled to take up the legal proceedings against you such as raising a case, laying seizure on your property which can legally be seized, and claiming from you the many damages and losses which you caused as a result of your violating the terms of the agreement and charging you all the fees, expenses and advocate fees and considering the agreement and its supplements to be cancelled from the date of termination of the period specified in this warning.

Faithfully yours

Attorney for the Warner
Advocate Massoud Khalifeh

Warning through the Notary Public at Amman made by Attorney of the warner under No. 1122, on 3/1/1994.

Expert sees privatisation as one way to address Jordan's foreign debt

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Privatising state-owned institutions "could be one of the means available to Jordan to address its foreign debt problem, but the move towards offering equity to foreign creditors should be coupled with internal reforms to make the offer attractive, according to a leading expert on privatisation.

Edgar Harrell, who now serves as a consultant on privatisation after leaving U.S. government service, said Thursday Jordan also had the right ingredients to seriously consider privatisation.

Dr. Harrell said he also believed that there is enough "political will" in Jordan towards accepting the concept of privatisation.

Addressing a group of journalists, Dr. Harrell, who met with Jordanian government officials and businessmen during a brief visit to Amman last week, said that he found a willingness among Jordanian officials to discuss privatisation.

That, he said, is a positive first step since "if there is no political will, there will be no privatisation."

However, Dr. Harrell cautioned, privatisation is not a solution to any specific problem but a concept that could overhaul the economy and put it on a course towards recovery and growth. "It is no answer in itself, but it should be reviewed."

Privatising government-

owned firms in an issue that has been talked about in Jordan for many years, but no real movement has been seen in this direction except the launching of a study on prospects for privatising the national carrier.

Dr. Harrell, who met with Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) Governor Mohammad Saad Al Nabulsi and Royal Jordanian President Basel Jarrah, a former finance minister, said Jordan had the human potential in terms of education expertise and the right climate in terms of a relatively low-level budget deficit and controlled inflation to consider privatisation.

But, he added, there is no "sense in transferring a public sector monopoly to private sector monopoly" by offering protection to the entity.

In the case of telecommunications, transport and airlines, which are in essence monopolies, "regulatory regimes" could be set up to ensure that the consumers get the best service. Specifically, Dr. Harrell cited the privatisation of telecommunications, where the government could attach certain conditions to the deal.

These conditions, he said, could include stipulations that the new entity will ensure that repairs are carried out and new connections are given within pre-determined time limits in addition to ensuring, for instance, that every village has a functional public telephone booth.

If, at the end of the period concessions, the new entity has

not fulfilled these conditions, then the government could reserve the right for itself to take over the entity, he said.

According to Dr. Harrell, privatising state-owned firms will be beneficial to all concerned in the long term despite the initial problems such as dislocation of workers and resistance from unions and interest groups.

Almost inevitably, privatisation of government-run companies leads to layoffs simply because the state employs redundant and inefficient staff and the private sector addresses this problem by dismissing people to cut costs.

To address such problems, Dr. Harrell said, the government has to set up a "safety net" in consultations with unions and workers, including unemployment compensation through the social security system, retraining opportunities, encouraging entrepreneurs in a free-market environment and removing barriers that dissuade investors.

The net beneficiaries of privatisation will be workers themselves since they would be able to reap better benefits from hard-work rather than straining under the heavy bureaucracy that is an inseparable element of any government-owned company.

Dr. Harrell said focus of privatisation should be on loss-making enterprises so that the government will get rid of burdens on the budget as well as liquidity to use in settling debts and invest in new ventures.

Profit-making institutions are easier to be privatised than those which incur losses as a result of inefficient administration, he noted.

The many forms of privatisation include transfer of partial or full ownership, joint public and private sector financing of projects, granting concessions and separating specific areas of operation and splitting them among different operators, he noted.

As an example, he cited Royal Jordanian, the national carrier, which is closely studying privatisation as a means to address its debt burden.

The airline is making an operational profit, only to see it wiped out because of the debt burden, and privatisation with a higher capital is suggested as the best avenue to solve the problem. Some of the airline's creditors could be given equity in exchange for the debts.

An international firm is conducting a study aimed at proposing the best mechanism for privatisation.

Dr. Harrell pointed out that the affiliated operations of Royal Jordanian, such as the catering and cargo services, could be separated and offered as concessions to the private sector.

He conceded that the debt burden of the airline was a negative factor in foreign investors' interest in acquiring equity in the carrier. Investor interest will have to be essentially based on the net worth of the airline, he said.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Photo exhibition by artist Muwaffaq Al Sheikh at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Sadik Kwaish entitled "Talisma" at Baladina Art Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition of Iraqi books at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition "Prints and Drawings of Fakhrelnissa Zeid" (1915-1991) until the 15th of January '94 at Darat al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation. Also showing the "Permanent" Exhibition. (Tel. 643251/2).

LECTURE

- ★ Lecture in Arabic entitled "The Arab Political Thought and the Challenges of Peace" by Mr. Mohammad Khashil at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 6:00 p.m.

FILMS

- ★ Video film in Arabic on German artist Katharina Sieverding and the art of sculpture at Goethe-Institut at 8:00 p.m.
- ★ German film entitled "Kinder, Kader Kommandeure" (with subtitles in English) at the Goethe-Institut at 8:00 p.m. (93 minutes).
- ★ Jordan River Designs offers things for sale at the showroom in Jabal Luweibdeh (8:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.) (Tel. 656872/628760).
- ★ Poetry recital by Syrian poet Hanif Yusef at the Phoenix Gallery for Art and Culture at 7:00 p.m.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Adwan opens Jordan fair in Holland

AMSTERDAM (Petra) — Tourism and Antiquities Minister Mohammad Al Adwan Friday opened the Jordanian pavilion at Netherland's Otricht international tourism fair, in which 88 countries are taking part. Dr. Adwan also met with delegations representing several countries participating in the fair and discussed with them means of enhancing tourism cooperation between Jordan and their respective countries. The minister later visited the pavilions of Arab countries participating in the fair, including Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Syria, Yemen and Palestine.

Labour symposium opens today

AMMAN (Petra) — A two-day symposium on labourers' rights starts here Saturday with participants from seven Arab countries. The symposium, organised by the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions (GFTU), in cooperation with the Brussels-based Free Trade Unions Association, aims at enhancing unionist rights and exchange of experiences in the field of labour legislations. Taking part in the symposium will be representatives of trade unions in Yemen, Tunisia, Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestine, Bahrain and Jordan.

Jordan to help green Lebanon

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan has decided to present 250,000 forest tree saplings to Lebanon to be used in the reforestation of areas ruined by the Lebanese civil war. The saplings will be sent to Lebanon as soon as possible.

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Jordanian Perspective

By Dr. Musa Keilani

Jerusalem — the need to rise above politics

EVER SINCE the Middle East peace process was launched in Madrid, more than two years ago, one of the key questions that hung in an air of uncertainty was the status of Jerusalem. Not that it is answered now; nor that an answer would be easy either.

But the appointment of a new Royal Commission on Jerusalem Affairs by His Majesty King Hussein last week has reaffirmed the basic essence of the Hashemite family's approach to the Holy City. There may be some who might argue that tackling the problem of Jerusalem could only bring further problems, but that argument does not take into consideration the intrinsic religious link that the Hashemites have with the Holy City.

One has to rise above the narrow vision of the politics that go along with any discussion on Jerusalem. It is not a political issue, but a religious one which has come under repeated attempts aimed at confusing it with politics.

Historically, the Hashemites were and remain the guardian of Jerusalem and the Islamic holy sites there. The physical control of the city remains with Israel today, but that does not alter its Islamic and Arab identity and roots there and should not be a reason for anyone to resign into accepting the status quo.

Heard during the ongoing debate on the draft budget for 1994 in Parliament was an argument that allocations for the upkeep of Waqf institutions in Jerusalem should be dropped. The argument held that such allocations in the past were acceptable since they served a "political purpose" and now that the Palestinians are asserting their right for an independent Palestinian state with Arab Jerusalem as its capital, there is little sense in Jordan continuing to spend money in the Holy City.

Such arguments have a very fundamental flaw since it is groundless to assert that politics was the basis for continued Jordanian involvement in Jerusalem even after the Kingdom's 1988 decision to sever legal and administrative links with the West Bank. Quite simply it was not.

On the contrary, Jordan's insistence on maintaining the Hashemites' religious links with Jerusalem and continued involvement in the affairs of the Islamic holy shrines there underlines the inalienable Arab and Muslim rights to the Holy City.

As such, it is quite disconcerting to hear some of our elected representatives making politically naive suggestions by adding a political colour to Jordan's involvement in Jerusalem.

However, that is an internal Jordanian issue, and the picture would be more clear to those who may not understand it or do not want to understand it as we go along further.

The Jordanian move to strengthen efforts to arrive at a satisfactory arrangement to protect the religious identity of Jerusalem and King Hussein's repeated affirmations that he would accept only God's sovereignty over the Holy City have to be seen against the realities on the ground today.

For one thing, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), by agreeing to put off negotiations on the status of Jerusalem for another three years in its Sept. 13 accord with

Israel, has made it imperative for the Arab and Islamic World to step in and ensure that the so-called interim period does not leave a vacuum in the efforts to salvage the Holy City from Judaisation.

The repeated affirmations and pledges by Israeli leaders not to let anyone change the status of Jerusalem as the "eternal and indivisible capital" of the Jewish state do indicate an Israeli realisation of the objectives of the Jordanian effort. For sure, they do not appreciate it and will do everything in their power to undermine it. Hence the pressing need to put the Islamic house in order and look at the issue more closely and candidly without letting political considerations cloud a judgement. There has to be a political will to do so.

That is the political aspect of the issue, if one would like to see it that way. But it should not be seen isolated from the decades of efforts that Jordan has put in not to allow any dilution of the Arab and Islamic rights in Jerusalem.

It has been a very consistent stand, unswayed by the course of political events. No doubt, it will only be hardened and toughened as we go along towards realising, hopefully, the rights of the Palestinians and a satisfactory solution to the overall Arab-Israeli conflict.

The vision of King Hussein is very clear. There cannot be any abandoning of the Arab and Muslim rights in Jerusalem, regardless of the shape of a peace settlement; and Jordan will fight it alone, if the Arabs and Muslims do not rise to the formidable challenge that poses itself on the way to safeguarding the Islamic rights in Jerusalem.

The King's repeated comments in this context are also clear. The Hashemites understand and appreciate the importance of Jerusalem to Christianity and Judaism, and that the only way to address the Christian and Jewish concerns in this context is through a frank and free dialogue among the three religions. But such a dialogue should essentially start from the very recognition and acceptance by all concerned of the Hashemites' role as the guardian of the Islamic holy shrines in Jerusalem.

The new Royal Commission on Jerusalem Affairs is definitely not the Islamic body that King Hussein proposed as a possible administrator of the Islamic holy shrines in Jerusalem, and the inclusion of non-Jordanian personalities in the commission should only be taken as a first step towards realising the objective of setting up such an all-embracing Islamic panel.

However, the overall Arab and Islamic response to the King's call for such a panel, representing all sects of the Islamic faith, has not been very forthcoming, perhaps because of the political confusion surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and the lingering strains in inter-Arab relations.

Indeed, that is a sad state of affairs, given the fact that we hear loud voices from the Muslim World reaffirming the importance of Jerusalem to the Islamic faith but little being done on an Islamic level to help boost the Jordanian endeavour to ensure that the Holy City is not lost for ever to the Muslims.

The case for Yasser Arafat

By Ludwig W. Tamari

FOR MONTHS AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE Declaration of Principles, the peace process now appears to be losing momentum. Both Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin seem to be unable to agree on the modalities of implementing the current agreement. The situation is volatile. In some corridors of power, Israel's long-term intentions are open to questioning and Mr. Arafat's ability to lead is subject to closer scrutiny.

After months of criticising Mr. Arafat for being too willing to deal with Israel, he is now being held accountable, by the Israelis for not being willing enough.

The present litany of Israel's criticism of the Palestinians and their leaders is reminiscent of the pre-Madrid days. Such criticism was meant to expose Palestinian helplessness, while the present barrage of criticism is designed to confirm Palestinian hopelessness. In either case, Israel's criticism should be considered as a diagnosis of Palestinian ailments and certainly not a confirmation of Palestinian frustration. The critics failed to mention that the Palestinian leadership reflected the status of its people: the leadership was fragmented because the Palestinian people were scattered all over the world. Not only their positions were uncoordinated, but also their leaders were systematically being decimated.

How many times in history has a stateless people negotiated for their homeland with their predators? How often has a people been asked to speak with one voice when it lacked a government, let alone an elected one? One wonders when will it be that human rights, as international recognised, will be synonymous with Palestinian human rights? Yet, when might is right, woe to the losers.

The questions are rhetorical. The most remarkable thing about the agreement is not that it is proving difficult to implement, but that it ever happened at all.

The fact that it happened is simply because both the Palestinians and the Israelis came to realise that since the beginning of the Palestinian catastrophe, for the first time, the Palestinians came to recognise one leader—Yasser Arafat—as the embodiment of their legitimate rights. The Israelis in turn saw in Mr. Arafat (Once upon a time the most wanted terrorist in the world) their hope to render out of the Palestinian entity, an oasis of peace in the Middle East. That is why it is important for the Palestinian people to stand together behind Yasser Arafat.

I am not appealing to blind loyalty. I want the Palestinian intelligentsia, along with the other Arab sympathisers and international supporters, to continue to question Mr. Arafat—we need that, and I am certain that Mr. Arafat would welcome it. He should understand that not all criticism is made in bad faith or intended as an attack on him. If this apologetics on behalf of Mr. Arafat is to be of any value, he ought to remember that in the past, the Palestinians placed their trust in him because they knew that he would listen. Mr. Arafat cannot stop listening now, simply because he does not like what he is hearing. Granted that, at any given time, criticism should be substantive, pointed and creative. Any criticism that is maliciously couched to destroy Mr. Arafat could have enormous consequences. It could escalate into a state of overt confrontation between the Palestinians. Before that happens, the Palestinians should take a step back and attempt to understand the current situation and honestly determine for themselves where they stand as a people.

It is time for a little truth—lest the Palestinians forget that for decades they had been tagged as terrorists. Bereft of friends in a world drawn tightly against them, the Palestinians should now depend on each other more than ever before. Yes, there are Palestinians who long to return to the Palestine that was, and which now is Israel. They will never make peace with Israel. Ever. I understand their rejectionism because there is a degree of rejectionism in each and every Palestinian. Make no mistake, the rejectionists are well intentioned patriots and ought to be heard. Of course it is far easier to criticise and do nothing at all than to work for peace. What do the rejectionists really oppose? Peace? Or only the peace of Yasser Arafat? Would an agreement with

Israel be any the more palatable if it were written by a rejectionist? I say it would, and Mr. Arafat would readily endorse it—who would not? Peace it would bring and peace is what we need.

The one maverick stripe of open militancy to the general principles is Hamas. For decades, Hamas's rejectionism has been mushrooming as a direct result of Israel's intransigence and denial of Palestinian inalienable rights.

The religious undertones of Hamas's rejectionism does not necessarily mean that they propagate the imposition of an Islamist Palestinian state as opposed to a secular state by popular vote. As patriots, the rank and file of Hamas would come to realise that "reason" is the handmaid of pure religion and the rewards of a virtuous and prosperous state is the result of the common ground of pure religion and good government. For religion without compassion is like secularism without reason. I am inclined to believe that, in the final resort, Hamas would not be ambivalent to the democratic process, since the democratic process is the one and only plausible entrée to a moral, peaceful and prosperous Palestine.

The truth about some rejectionists, whether they are nationalists or Islamists, is that they are now more ferocious in their opposition to the general principles than many of the Israelis. How ironic that the one principle, which the Palestinian and Israeli rejectionist hold in common is their unwilling hatred of Mr. Arafat and Mr. Rabin. So much so that the intensity of their hatred has transcended the empiricism of reinstating Palestinian rights on the one hand and ensuring Israel's peace and security on the other. Although this stripe of the rejectionists is limited in number, the fact remains that if there are fewer wolves in the forest it does not mean that the forest is safe.

That leaves us with Yasser Arafat. And while he is not the perfect choice for this job of leading the Palestinians out of the impositions of this imperfect agreement, he remains the only choice. He has won that through the thick and thin of decades of incessant struggle. Since the qualitative mien of leaders is often equated in terms of their ratings as to who is the hammer and who is the anvil, Mr. Arafat had his leadership honed by the hammer into a steely anvil. The anvil that he became evolved as a second nature. Mr. Arafat became adept at foretelling the reactions to the hammer strokes even before they fell. That was Arafat the anvil until the Declaration of Principles.

In retrospect, the annals of Mr. Arafat's ability to survive read like a Greek melodrama; he withstood the deadly hammering of international intrigues, triumphed over the agonising dissension among his own ranks and, above all, he managed to keep floating notwithstanding the miscasting blows of his own miscalculations.

The Declaration of Principles transformed Mr. Arafat from an anvil into a hammer. This sudden shift in roles placed enormous responsibilities on him and on the Palestinian people—who are not solely responsible for carrying out the implementation of the current peace agreement. Yet, the challenges facing Mr. Arafat did not come with any grant of authority.

By trying to forge the makings of the Palestinian state, Mr. Arafat was required to wield the hammers of responsibility while he was denied the minimum ingredients of authority. Here lies one of the serious lapses in the Declaration of Principles. This structural omission, whether by accident or design, meant that Mr. Arafat will be damned if he does and doomed if he does not. For students of history and geo-politics, this state of suspense animation in which Mr. Arafat was put should rate as one of the modern classics of negotiated power politics.

For all intents and purposes, and without sounding facetious, I tend to believe that for Mr. Arafat to get out of this impasse, he should wish for a successful conclusion of the ongoing peace negotiations between Syria/Jordan and Israel. The Israelis have won many battles, yet now it is within their power Palestinians and Israelis—to win the decisive war of peace.

The writer is a Washington-based lawyer. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Israel after the Ukraine

THE CAUSE for a nuclear-free world received a significant boost Friday when the Ukraine entered in an agreement with Russia and the United States to scrap its nuclear arsenal. This cause was also served by agreement between the United States and Russia to stop operating their nuclear weapons under the antagonistic presumptions that shaped the two countries' relations since the beginning of the cold war.

Never since the dawn of the nuclear age has the United States and Russia not aimed their mass-destruction weapons at each other. Now they will. Thus Americans and Russians will feel safer knowing that they are not the set target of nuclear missiles.

The mutual assured destruction (MAD) that promised apocalypse for both the U.S. and the former Soviet Union had they unleashed their missiles on each other has prevented the use of nuclear weapons during the many conflicts and threats that developed during the cold war.

A realisation that economic stability and world cooperation, not nuclear weapons, are the only guarantee of real security has contributed to the signing of the agreement. But so did the harsh economic conditions through which peoples of the former Soviet republics find themselves living after the disintegration of the Soviet empire.

Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk was accused of treason for signing away the world's largest arsenal of nuclear weapons. The fact that he signed the agreement at a time when his country is bordering on economic collapse prompted his opponents in parliament to say that the president sold out the Ukraine's interests to the United States and Russia.

Kravchuk will on Thursday be battling those opponents over the treaty. His chances of winning would to a large extent depend on his ability to convince lawmakers of the viability of the "nuclear-free dividend."

Arguments against the treaty on security grounds could be refuted by the protection that the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty gives to signatories by stipulating that nuclear weapons cannot be used against nations party to it. So can decades of nuclear race which only succeeded in draining the economies of the nations who engaged in it.

The Ukrainian president will win his argument in parliament if he can forcefully articulate the promise of economic prosperity and social stability that relaxed relations which the Ukraine's big neighbour, Russia, and the U.S. can produce.

Both countries can strengthen his case: Russia by removing the fears of any imperial and expansionist ambitions that it has against its neighbours; and the U.S. by offering economic help not only to the Ukraine but to all the impoverished republics who are still suffering from their Soviet heritage.

After the treaty was signed, President Bill Clinton said that military strength is not the key to security. He was right. But he will be wrong if this logic is applied only in places where a threat to the U.S.' direct security presents itself.

The American president should carry his argument to the Middle East where the cost of armament has for so long emptied the treasuries of the region. Israel is refusing to make the necessary concessions for peace in the Middle East on the grounds that its security could be threatened. Its giant armament programme is forcing other countries in the region to earmark for their defence expenditures funds that are badly needed to finance health, environmental, educational and social development projects.

The U.S. has so far done little to keep Israel in check. In fact, U.S. policies, and Washington's huge military aid to Israel, has accelerated the armament race in the region and denied it the right to claim the high moral ground when it comes to the arms race.

Little has the U.S. done also to limit or stop Israel's nuclear programme. The big noise Washington and its allies make about the nascent attempts by Iraq and Iran to develop nuclear weapons compares to a deafening silence over Israel's already mature, and deadly nuclear arsenal.

Nuclear weapons pose a real threat to world security wherever they are. They do so in Israel as much as in the rest of the world. Efforts to end the nuclear nightmare should not be stifled and restrained by narrow political interests or the noteworthiness of the threat from Washington.

ATOMIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

COLUMNIST in Al Dustour daily advocated the cause of teachers who are struggling to establish an association similar to other associations in the country. The teachers are in an association which is part of the country's elements of democracy and one which can contribute to solving the country's problems and helping them better contribute to the socio-economic development, said Taher Al Adwan. The writer said that a draft law on the formation of this association is still facing obstacles at the Senate, in a manner reminiscent of the previous Parliament, and the whole issue is now referred to the Higher Council for the Interpretation of the Constitution before further action can be taken by Parliament, said the writer. The teachers had hoped that the draft law, which failed to win the favour of the previous Parliament, would be passed by the new one and indeed the hopes increased when the Lower House gave its consent to it, added the writer. While that it is the right of the senators to scrutinise this law before taking a final decision, one can only say that the teachers have a legitimate right to raise their voices and to have an association to take care of their interests in the atmosphere of democracy, said the writer.

The Week In Print Jordanian-Palestinian deal draws controversial reaction from media

Reviewed by Elia Nasrallah

THE JORDANIAN-Palestinian accord signed in Amman on Jan. 7 continued to draw reactions from the local columnists in the Arabic press. Also covered were the stalled Middle East peace process and prospects for a settlement, in addition to a number of domestic issues.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily said that the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement was a reaffirmation of the fact that the two peoples are one and have had the same destiny and aspirations throughout history.

Dr. Jamal Shaer said that the Jordanian-Palestinian unity has been the most successful among various forms of unions hatched by different Arab states in modern history.

The Palestinians and the Jordanians are linked geographically, socially, economically and demographically, the two sides continue to face the same challenges and the same goals and both believe in parliamentary democracy and respect for human rights, added the writer. The aim of this agreement is to attain a federation which is a form of union that would benefit the two peoples, he concluded.

Sawt Al Shaab daily hailed the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement as a true response to the aspirations and the hopes of the people on the two banks of the River Jordan.

Agreement by the two sides to coordinate their stand vis-a-vis the peace process, to regulate the work of Jordanian banks in the West Bank and to cooperate in economic matters is bound to open the door wide for the Jordanians and the Palestinians to embark on measures that would bring about further progress to both, said the paper.

It is only a small step on the long way of common action which is not strewn with roses, said Hani Saudi in describing the Jordanian-Palestinian deal.

The writer said that it is strange to see some writers expressing dismay over the limited agreement between the two sides and it should be stressed that the deal was only the beginning towards other more ambitious steps. One should not expect a

great deal at this stage and one cannot expect more than has been achieved between the two sides, taking into consideration that the Palestinian land is still under occupation, added Saudi.

His views were echoed by Sultan Al Hattab, a columnist in Al Ra'i, who said that the agreement represented a big achievement, especially as different nations and world organisations have their eyes on the occupied Arab lands to make major investments.

The writer said that the opening of banks and coordination in economic matters as well as on the common stand vis-a-vis the peace process constitute a major accomplishment on the part of the Jordanian and the Palestinian leaderships.

Describing the Jordanian-Palestinian deal as a step backward, a noted columnist in Al Ra'i said that Jordan would have been better off without it.

Fahed Al Fanek said that under the present deal, Jordanian-Palestinian economic relations would not advance but perhaps would go back.

The establishment of Jordanian banks in the occupied lands is a temporary measure, according to the deal, because this can continue while the autonomy rule lasts; under a Palestinian state, things could change and the Palestinians would have their own currency and their own financial, banking and monetary systems, said the writer who also noted that the deal provides only for encouraging the private sector on both sides to embark on investments, but there was nothing specific about this particular point.

His views were countered by Mahmoud Rimawi, a columnist in Al Ra'i, who said that the deal transcends the question of coordination and cooperation and goes beyond these lines because it paves the way for a common market, a common economic life and unity in the future.

The writer said that the deal was necessary to define the elements and the components for future unity, taking into account the changes that occurred on the ground since the 1967 occupation.

Referring to the Clinton-Assad summit in Geneva this week, a columnist in Al Dustour expressed the view that the U.S. president could have something up his sleeve because it was he who called for the meeting.

Mohammad Kawash, who expressed hope that Mr. Clinton would come up with something concrete towards giving momentum to the peace process, said one has to remember that Syria continues to hold on to its demands of full Israeli withdrawal before peace can be attained.

The writer said there is no chance for any progress in the peace efforts unless the Rabin government expresses desire to comply with the U.N. resolutions which call for withdrawal from Syrian, Lebanese, Jordanian and Palestinian lands.

Taher Al Udwan, a columnist in Al Dustour, expressed the view that the 28 month Arab-Israeli peace process has been a total failure.

Since the Madrid conference, the Arabs achieved nothing on the ground and despite the separate negotiations between Israel and the Arab parties not a single step has been achieved, largely due to Israel's intransigence, the writer said.

If anything, the Madrid conference has opened the door for Israel to show more adamant stands and perpetuated the inter-Arab differences, rendering any hope for a true inter-Arab coordination vis-a-vis the peace process a mirage, said the writer.

Referring to the resumed Palestinian-Israeli peace talks in Tabaa, Sawt Al Shaab daily said that Israel has a tendency to raise controversial issues from the start in order to render the talks fruitless.

The Israelis are determined to prolong the period of negotiations with the hope of causing discouragement to the Palestinian side and driving the Palestinian negotiating teams to desperation, accepting the Israeli dictates, said the paper.

By declaring its determination to hold on to the question of security and the bridges, Israel is placing obstacles right from the beginning of the talks, it added.

The paper's views were echoed by Arafat Hijazi, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab, who said that the Palestinian-Israeli talks tend to render the Palestinians powerless in terms of defence.

While the Israelis continue their atrocities against the people in the occupied Arab land, and while they continue to arm themselves and hold on to the borders and matters of security, they want the Palestinians to give up their right to ensuring security or controlling their own internal affairs, said the writer.

What Israel aims from these talks, he said, is to get the

approval of the Palestinians for Israel's continued hegemony on the lands and the people of Palestine.

Commenting on last week's visit to the region by a U.S. congressional team, Tareq Masarweh, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily, said that the team did not come to advocate the cause of the 13,000 detained Palestinians in Israel jails but to search for the missing Israeli troops lost in Israel's aggression against Lebanon in 1982.

The writer said that the team did not come here in order to discuss ways for ending the occupation of Lebanon and the other parts occupied lands, but rather to appease the Jewish lobby in the United States.

The team's mission is provocative to the Arabs and one that shows U.S.'s disregard to the cause of peace, he said.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily highlighted Jordan's role in trying to preserve Yemen's unity, noting that this is motivated by Jordan's keenness on achieving a pan-Arab unity.

Sultan Al Hattab said that despite the elapse of three years, this Yemeni unity has not been fully implemented and practical steps were needed to put it into force. Let us hope, said the writer, that the slogans raised by the Yemenis over the past three years would be translated into action with some help from Jordan and the other Arab countries concerned over Arab unity.

Mohammad Kawash, a columnist in Al Dustour, said that the two Yemenis can not end their differences and protect their unity simply because the United States does not want this to come about.

This is a stage in which the Arabs must make peace with Israel and therefore it is taboo for the Arabs to reconcile with one another or to take steps to preserve their unity, said the writer.

For this reason, he added, we have heard Qatar and Oman trying to end Arab differences, but we have seen no practical steps on the part of any other Arab country to cultivate solidarity among Arab governments at this stage, said the writer.

A writer in Al Dustour described Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majall's programmes to overhaul the public administration system as a daring move to end the obsolete system that does not cater to the needs of the modern age.

Mohammad Daoud said that the time has come for serving justice and be fair to the competent employees, and ensure a more decent life for the pensioners.

He said that there is need for incentives to be given to the creative workers.

Prague — Venice and Chicago in one?

By Justin Keay

PRAGUE, Czech Republic — Soon after the velvet revolution of 1989, they came: slowly at first, then in increasing numbers, putting increasing strain on Prague's outdated infrastructure, stretching hotels, restaurants and bars to capacity. As with Venice in the 1970s or even in the 1980s, a vast, seemingly endless influx of visitors is changing the very essence of the place: Prague's relative isolation during the communist era has made subsequent changes all the more dramatic.

For anyone familiar with the city before 1990, Prague has become a travesty, a touristic facade of the place that inspired Kafka to pen his nightmarish visions and Havel its humanistic essays. The eerie, melancholic atmosphere which pervaded the city has gone, replaced by brash western consumerism and by a relentless catering to the lowest denominator.

A perfect example is the old

town square, Staromestske Namesti, one of the most beautiful in Europe and — until recently — largely unchanged from its 17th century heyday. Today visitors struggle to get an impression of what it must have been like before it was ruined by outdoor cafes, fast-food joints and cheap jewelry stalls, as well as such tasteless horrors as the "original blacksmith's shoppe." While with a maximum of avarice and a minimum of good taste.

The first assault on your wallet comes when you are charged an average of 9 per cent commission for changing money at (usually western-run) exchange booths; there will be many more — by unscrupulous bar-tenders, restaurateurs and taxi-drivers — all of whom are legally allowed to charge visitors more than the going Czech rates, provided the food or service is "in some way" different. If they don't get you, the town's growing population of thieves and scam merchants will. The problem is such that

trams and buses entering the centre announce over the speaker systems, in three languages: "You are entering an area renowned for pickpockets. Please keep an eye on your belongings at all times."

For the past three years, Prague has been the European city to see, and be seen in. Tourists of all generations from Germany, the U.S., Britain, Italy and Spain, not to mention further afield, have poured into the city, eager to grab their share of the city of Kafka.

An excellent location in the heart of Europe, together with a now fading reputation for being inexpensive, relatively "undiscovered" and "atmospheric," has helped sustain the flow. At any time of the year, visitors are a common sight in the old town and on Wenceslas Square, clutching guide books nobody can blame the Czechs for turning westwards after so many years of drab communism. Prague in 1993 poses a

stark warning to other former communist countries seeking to escape their unhappy past through such a rapid embrace of the free market.

"After coming all this way, I'm disappointed," says Jean, a visitor to the city from Los Angeles. "This place is like America." Many others echo the complaint.

Internationalised and marketised with incredible speed, the city stands in danger of losing its soul, or at the very least, those ingredients which made it so special. The dangers were always there, given the city's compactness and proximity to Germany, but they have been exacerbated by Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus' uncritical laissez-faire and by the need of international criminal networks to expand their operations.

The new Prague becomes noticeable the moment you leave the subway and walk onto the pedestrian boulevard Na Prikoze, or into the historic old town centre. Your ears are assailed by the un-Czech sounds of Latin-American salsa music, or by the latest U2 album being blasted from a T-shirt shop. Your eyes strain to take in the cornucopia of McDonald's wrappings being blown across the street or garish stalls hawking every conceivable souvenir, produced and sold from July through September, their presence amounts to an epidemic.

Prague's relatively cheap rents have also made it the latest stop for those determined to put the Bohemian back into Bohemia. Thousands of young travellers hang out on Charles Bridge, while post-modernist hippies, staggering from an excess of the excellent, still cheap Czech beer, make Prague resemble Haight-Ashbury in the 1960s.

The town's increasingly overstretched and demoralised police force finds itself unable to cope. Prague's position, and the Czech Republic's relatively open borders and reputation for lax law enforcement have turned the city into a Chicago for the 1990s, an essential staging post for money-launderers, drug-dealers and car thieves from all over Europe, but especially from the former



The beauty of Prague's famous Charles Bridge — which links the old town to the Castle District — has been blemished by stalls setting tourist souvenirs (WNL photo)

East bloc. Shootouts and armed robbery have become commonplace.

The two associated phenomena account for many of the changes that have transformed the city in recent months. The famous Charles Bridge, a historic pedestrian thoroughfare linking the old town to the Hradcany, or Castle District, has always been a magnet for visitors. Soon after 1989, it became the haunt of young Czechs and foreigners, a place simply to sit and watch the passers-by. The opportunity was not ignored by the city's organised criminal community who bought their way into the stalls that had sprung up along the bridge, selling everything from drawings and paintings to tackier representations of the city's sights.

1991-92 saw this process reach a climax, as rival gangs contested the lucrative site,

and the city's police force proved itself unable to handle the occasional violence that resulted from rival claims to "pitchces."

The result, in 1993, is that control of the bridge and of what happens on it, has been passed to a private company, the Charles Bridge Artists Association, who guarantee to pay to the city taxes which it was previously unable to collect. The association employs private security guards who patrol the bridge, ensuring that only accredited salesmen operate the stalls there. Dressed entirely in black, carrying walkie-talkies and armed with long black sticks, they bear a strong resemblance to New York cops. Incredibly, they have the right to tell pedes-

trians what to do. Uniquely for any prime tourist site in a European city, the Charles Bridge has, de facto, been privatised.

Private security firms have become a growth business in the new Prague, with a recent estimate suggesting that some 550 operate in the capital. Legally, they have little more authority than a private citizen, but this has not stopped them throwing their weight around in the interests of their employers.

Hitherto, the government has done little to control the activities of private security guards because they have little option but to co-opt their help in the battle against crime. This has led to strong resentment from Czechs who suggest

that many of the people employed by the security companies have criminal records themselves, and are in many ways as bad as the problem they are supposed to be fighting. Many are also reputed to be former employees of the StB, the communist secret service officially disbanded in 1990, who have not been afraid to use their knowledge of security files to their own advantage.

This brave new world is not to the liking of ordinary Czechs. "After so many years of no change, we have this," says Olga, a resident in the old city, casting a look at the endless passing parade of tourists outside. "I don't know what to say; it just doesn't feel like home any more" — World News Link.

King and Clinton to meet on Friday

(Continued from page 1)

King and President Clinton are expected to review the work of a joint Jordanian-American-Israeli economic working group and ideas and proposals discussed during the Middle East visit in December of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

The conclusion of an agreement on reopening Jordanian commercial banks in the occupied territories is the only concrete result so far of the work of the group. Negotiations on the accord had started almost one year before the group was formed during a visit by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan to Washington in October.

Proposals for joint projects and American suggestions of "confidence-building measures" between Jordan and Israel are also expected to be reviewed by King Hussein and President Clinton.

Prime Minister Majali, who delayed his departure for Washington for a few days so that he could meet with visiting U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown on Monday, told reporters last week that Jordan hoped "for continuous support of the Jordanian economy and defence forces as well as debt reduction."

President Clinton has pledged to help Jordan in addressing its foreign debts, and diplomats say that one of the measures under consid-

eration could be a write-off of part of the Kingdom's debts to the U.S.

Amman owes Washington \$946 million, including \$380 million in military debts incurred during the 1980s, when Jordan depended solely on the U.S. to equip its armed forces. In 1987, Jordan turned to the then Soviet Union for its needs of a defensive missile system after the Reagan administration flatly turned down a \$1.8 billion arms package for the Kingdom.

Jordanian-American military ties have been renewed since then. Armed forces of the two sides held at least three joint military exercises in the southern desert and the Red Sea after the end of the Gulf war over Kuwait in 1991.

General Joseph Hoar, head of the U.S. Central Command, was in Jordan last week on his third visit to the Kingdom after assuming office in 1991.

His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, the Regent, and Dr. Majali, who is also defence minister, held talks with Gen. Hoar. Ideas discussed during the meeting are expected to be explored during the King's summit with President Clinton.

Officials and informed sources say that despite President Clinton's pledge in October, even the release of up to \$35 million in aid to Jordan has been held up.

The administration issued a certification to release the aid on Sept. 15, one day after Jordan and Israel signed an agenda outlining the basis for negotiations and a peace agreement.

Also expected to be raised during the White House meeting are Jordan's concerns over the de facto blockade of Aqaba as part of the enforcement of the international sanctions against Iraq and what officials here describe as stalling at the U.N. over Jordan's requests for permissions for exports of sanction-exempt food and medicine to Iraq.



Ungaro for men reaches Jordan

AMMAN — Abu Shakra Trading Agency Thursday, Jan. 13 held a press conference during which the agency's General Manager Raed Abu Shakra introduced eau de toilette ungaro pour l'Homme III from Parfums Ungaro.

coherent. A touch sophisticated, ungaro pour l'Homme III forms the key stone of the ungaro house of perfumes, where all fragrances play their own role, without conflict.

Emanuel Ungaro addresses himself to men who enjoy the company of women. He is now launching a third fragrance to flatter and satisfy their nostrils and make them more desirable.

House votes on draft budget today

(Continued from page 1)

decision by the Central Bank of Jordan to lift curbs on commercial bank credits was "a related one and would help capital flight."

Deputy Munir Sobar, member of the House Finance Committee, requested that the role of the inspection and control bureau be "clarified and a law corresponding to its role be issued."

Some deputies requested that the service and production sectors not be restricted to the Kingdom's major cities and at distant rural areas be given proper attention in terms

of upgraded infrastructure and services.

Deputy Mohammad Hunaiti (Amman) limited his speech to demands for infrastructure services in his district, pointing to the lack of water, electricity and road networks in many areas of his constituency.

Deputy Nader Thuheirat (Irbid) called for "easy and convincing means to collect taxes and devise legislation that would prevent tax duality."

Ten more deputies are scheduled to take the podium today.

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The aid began to decline when oil prices weakened in the second half of 1980s. It stood at around \$14 billion between 1985 and 1989 compared with \$30.4 billion between 1980 and 1984.

"We have not yet reached an agreement," BAE said "but we are still in contact with them." "We are not negotiating at the moment," the spokesman admitted, "but we intend to start negotiations again. We don't know when."

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A black and white advertisement banner for KLM. On the left is the KLM logo with a crown above it. To its right is the word "EXOTIC" in a serif font. Further right is a circular logo with the letters "hit" inside. The word "AMSTERDAM" is written in a large, bold, serif font across the center. Below this, the text "KLM TICKET & 7 DAYS IN" is written in a smaller serif font, followed by "5 STAR DELUXE HOTELS FOR JD 700". A horizontal line separates this text from the bottom line, which reads "CALL HISHAM INTERNATIONAL TOURS Tel: 698180 / 698181". On the right side of the banner is a stylized illustration of a Dutch windmill and a woman in traditional Dutch attire.

Norway's Holst mourned as peace broker

OSLO (R) — Norwegian Foreign Minister Johan Joergen Holst, who died unexpectedly Thursday, was mourned around the world as a vital force behind the historic peace deal between Israel and the PLO.

Mr. Holst, 56, in hospital to recover from a stroke last month, apparently died from a new stroke during the night, his doctor said. He had worked tirelessly in 1993, when Norway hosted at least 14 secret meetings between the PLO and Israel.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said: "The state of Israel will remember Johan Jorgen Holst as the person who succeeded in bringing the distant together, in overcoming the enmity of generations and in laying foundations for peace in the Middle East."

In Tunis, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat said in a message of condolence: "This is a big loss... We lost with his early departure one of the sincerest friends of our Palestinian people."

He said Mr. Holst's efforts had enabled the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel to recognise each other. The two sides signed a deal on limited Palestinian autonomy in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho in Washington last September.

At that time, Mr. Holst said he felt humbled by what he called "a little role" in the talks.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher praised Mr. Holst as "a man of high ideals and integrity" who helped lay the groundwork for the peace accord.

He said in a statement during a visit to Moscow that Mr. Holst's "personal commitment to reconciliation and peace in the Middle East will stand as a work of hope and life for the people of the region."

He said Mr. Holst had helped create the environment that made possible the agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel.

"Foreign Minister Holst's nurturing of the hopes for peace of peoples far flung from Norway's shores made him a symbol of Norway's own values," he said.

Mr. Christopher said he learned of Mr. Holst's death "with the deepest sorrow."

"I worked closely with Johan and knew him to be a man of high ideals and integrity. He will be sorely missed. Our thoughts are with his family and the people of Norway," he said.

Flags flew at half mast throughout Norway and Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland began a cabinet meeting with a minute's silence after paying tribute to Mr. Holst and his family.

The PLO said it had decided to name a main road and a square in Jericho after Mr. Holst and would send a high-ranking delegation to his funeral. No date has yet been set.

Mr. Holst suffered a stroke on Dec. 16, but was moved Wednesday from the National Hospital in central Oslo to Sunnaas Hospital outside the city — on belief he was over the worst.

Before his first stroke last month, he had spent a week in hospital suffering from exhaustion after a hectic autumn during which he said he barely slept.

This week he was nominated by a German politician for the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize. But the Norwegian guardians of the prize are barred by a 1974 rule from awarding it posthumously.

The late U.N. Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjold, was the only peace laureate to win posthumously, in 1961.

Although the peace deal was signed in Washington in September, Israel and the PLO are still wrangling over how to implement it.

Mr. Holst and four other Norwegian mediators, including his wife Marianne Heiberg, a Middle East researcher, provided Israeli and PLO negotiators with an informal family atmosphere in the secret meetings.

A former defence minister with an encyclopaedic knowledge of international affairs, Mr. Holst became foreign minister in April.

It was not clear who would replace Mr. Holst.

Army: Olovo fight could decide fate of Bosnia

TUZLA, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP) — Serbs fought Muslim-led government troops north-east of Sarajevo Friday in what a Bosnian army spokesman called a "life or death" battle that could decide the war.

Both sides poured huge reinforcements into frontline fighting near Olovo and Vares, said the spokesman, Ekrem Avdic.

The Serbs are trying to sever a sleeve of government-held territory before a new round of peace talks on Jan. 18. If part of the corridor is captured it would cut off other Muslim-held towns from reinforcement and might force Bosnian government acceptance of the U.N.-sponsored peace plan.

The Serbs are pushing northwest towards their holding in northern Bosnia. If successful, they will cut off the government strongholds of Tuzla and Zenica from each other and other government-held territory to the south.

Tuzla is a Muslim stronghold whose pre-war population of 130,000 has more than tripled with refugees, most U.N. aid to Tuzla comes from Serbia, and access depends on Bosnian Serbs controlling northern Bosnia.

"A decisive battle is taking place now," Mr. Avdic told the Associated Press. "It's a battle for Bosnia-Herzegovina, actually. It will be easier to deal with us."

"We're expecting a fight for life or death. There are huge forces on both sides," said Mr. Avdic, whose Bosnian army 2nd Corps is responsible for the Olovo area. "We reinforced all frontlines because we are aware of the importance of this front line for the entire state."

The Serb army claimed Thursday that its troops sent Muslim-led government soldiers fleeing after breaching defence lines near Olovo, 25 miles (40 kilometres) north of the capital, Sarajevo. The Bosnian government denied that and said its lines of defence were stable.

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However, Serbs have conceded on another NATO demand and were permitting the rotation of U.N. troops from besieged Srebrenica, 70 kilometres (40 miles) southeast of Tuzla, U.N. peacekeeper spokesman Lt. Col. Bill Aikman said.

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Croat forces used helicopters and jets in central Bosnia on Thursday and early Friday helicopters directed jets firing on a government ammunition factory," Mr. Aikman said.

Bosnian government troops have recently made advances in central Bosnia, squeezing Bosnian Croats into two enclaves.

Associated Press. "It's a battle for Bosnia-Herzegovina, actually. It will be easier to deal with us."

"We're expecting a fight for life or death. There are huge forces on both sides," said Mr. Avdic, whose Bosnian army 2nd Corps is responsible for the Olovo area. "We reinforced all frontlines because we are aware of the importance of this front line for the entire state."

The Serb army claimed Thursday that its troops sent Muslim-led government soldiers fleeing after breaching defence lines near Olovo, 25 miles (40 kilometres) north of the capital, Sarajevo. The Bosnian government denied that and said its lines of defence were stable.

Bosnian Radio said more than 1,000 shells hit Olovo's southern front Thursday. It also reported clashes on fronts further east.

Tuzla came under sporadic shelling Thursday that left at least three people dead and four wounded.

The United Nations have for months pressed Serbs open Tuzla's airport to allow more aid in, but the Serbs have refused, opening the airport would permit an airlift similar to the one keeping Sarajevo alive.

The Serbs have Tuzla and its airport within artillery range, and have shown no signs of bending despite NATO indications it would bomb Serb positions if the airport remained closed.</

Belarus player wins Virginia Slims tourney

CHICAGO (AP) — Natalia Zvereva, whose tennis success has been shaped more by doubles, was not sure if she would ever win a singles title again. It had been four years, and even though she is only 22, she didn't like her chances.

"It's not that I didn't believe in myself," the Belarus player said Sunday after winning the Virginia Slims of Chicago 6-3, 7-5 over Chanda Rubin. "The competition is so much better now."

"I proved myself wrong," said Zvereva, who used a steady serve and a variety of shots, including a low-to-the-ground slice backhand to offset the hard ground strokes of the 17-year-old Rubin.

"She didn't like the low balls, especially to her backhand," Zvereva said. "I tried to keep the pace off. It helps a lot on a fast surface. A lot of girls hit balls deep, flat and hard. Sometimes it's not wise to hit it harder."

Zvereva, ranked second in the world in doubles and 19th in singles, took a 5-0 lead in the first set as Rubin, who won only two points in the first four games, sprayed errors all over the University of Illinois-Chicago Pavilion supreme surface.

But trailing 0-5 and love-40 after back-to-back double faults, Rubin lost her nerves and began to hit out in her first major tour final. The errors turned into winners as she fought off the three set points and then won three straight games.

"I couldn't get into the match early on, Rubin said. "I

was missing a lot of balls. After going down love-five, I hit a good ball for a point and I said to myself, 'Why not go for it now, you've got nothing to lose?' And I won the next three games."

Zvereva finally won the set 6-3 when Rubin, who had fended off two more set points in the ninth game, hit long.

Zvereva broke for a 3-2 lead in the second set, but Rubin broke right back, tying the set with a top spin lob and then holding for a 4-3 lead when Zvereva twice hit long and made another backhand error.

Zvereva then made two tough volleys to win the next game. But Rubin, who hit serves timed at 166 kph, came up with three strong serves in a row to escape a 0-30 hole and take a 5-4 lead.

Zvereva held for 5-5, then broke Rubin at love with a backhand winner down the line and three straight Rubin errors. The third one a swinging volley into the net.

"I went up 5-4, I started making a lot of errors. I don't know what happened to me," said Rubin, who made 36 unforced errors in the 80-minute match.

"I could not afford to go to a third set," Zvereva said. "My body is tired from all the tennis I have played this week. I knew I had to close it out." And she did. Rubin made more errors to start the final game and Zvereva punctuated her first singles victory since 1990 with an ace. She had five for match and got 61 per cent of her serves in.

Pippen emerges from Jordan's shadow to star in All-Star Game

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Scottie Pippen, in the shadow of Michael Jordan's spotlight for the first six years of his career, knew it was time to grab it himself in the NBA All-Star Game.

"Having Michael on our club really overshadowed guys like Horace Grant, B.J. Armstrong and myself," Pippen said late Sunday after leading the East to a 127-118 victory over the West. "It was time for us to step up as All-Stars a little more. I had my mind set to play much better than I played an All-Star game."

Pippen, making his fourth All-Star appearance but his first since his superstar teammate on the Chicago Bulls retired last October, scored 29 points on 9-for-15 shooting and grabbed 11 rebounds to win most valuable player honours.

"I tried to assert myself a little more," Pippen said. "My skills are able to put me up among the elite players. I don't think I needed to go out today and prove anything to anybody."

East coach Lenny Wilkens, who this season became the second NBA coach with 900 career victories, had seven first-time All-Stars on his 12-man roster. But he went with his veterans when things got tight, especially Pippen, Mark Price and Patrick Ewing — who combined for 69 points.

"I just like the attitude of the guys," Wilkens said. "They showcase, but they're true competitors. When the game is on the line, they want to win. Pippen, Mark and Patrick were steady forces down the stretch."

Pippen, wearing fire-engine red shoes, averaged 9.3 points in his first three All-Star games. Despite his 29 points, he only scored two in the fourth quarter, but they were big — a baseline jumper with 2:10 left after the West pulled within two points.

"It was the shoes," Pippen joked about his performance. "Everybody was looking at my feet too much. I was shooting well and I just continued to let my shot flow."

The East took its largest lead, 103-90, in the first minutes of the fourth quarter, but the West rallied with a 17-5 run, closing to 108-107 with 7:17 left. Gary Payton's six points and Daid Robinson's five keyed the comeback.

But the East regained control as New York teammates Ewing and John Starks combined to score the next nine East points for a 117-110 lead.

A basket by Clifford Robinson and a 3-pointer by John Stockton made it 117-115 before Pippen, after missing two free throws, connected on his baseline shot.

David Robinson and Hakeem Olajuwon shared scoring honours with 19 points each for the West, which trails the All-Star series 28-16. Ewing scored 12 of his 20 points in the fourth quarter and Price also had 20 for the East, which had 10 3-pointers to one for the West. Pippen was 5-for-9 from that range.

"He was in a zone," West coach George Karl



NBA Eastern Conference's Scottie Pippen of the Chicago Bulls goes to the bucket past Shawn Kemp of Seattle during the 2nd quarter of the All-Star Game (AP photo)

said. "It's difficult when you're substituting a great deal to keep the same guy on him."

Shaquille O'Neal, the NBA's leading scorer this season, had a miserable day for the East, missing 10 of 12 shots and seven of 11 free throws to finish with eight points. But he managed 10 rebounds.

"They were quadruple teaming me, triple teaming me," O'Neal said. "I thought somebody was going to play me straight up, but it didn't happen. It means somebody respects me if they had to put four guys on me."

The West, down by eight at halftime, rallied in the third quarter, closing within four twice before Price hit a jumper and a 3-pointer in a span of 37 seconds, helping the East rebuild the margin to 101-90 going into the final 12 minutes.

Olajuwon dominated inside for the West early in the game with 12 points in the first five minutes on two dunks, two layups, a hook and two free throws.

The West led 25-23 late in the first period, but the East went on a spurt and led 72-64 at the half.

Germany, Norway and Russia reap Olympic victory

LILLEHAMMER, Norway (AP) — Germany, Norway and Russia struck gold at the Lillehammer Games Monday. The United States reaped heartbreak.

Germany's George Hackl became the first solo luger to win back-to-back Olympic gold medals.

In Thomas Alsgaard, a bright new Norwegian cross-country star was born.

On the speedskating oval, Russia's Alexander Golubev set an Olympic record while leading his team to a 1-2 finish in the men's 500-metre sprint.

For the Americans, woes began when their luge medal hopes crashed out of competition. Then, hard-luck Dan Jansen slipped during the speedskating sprint and failed for the fourth-straight Olympics to medal in the 500-metre sprint.

While vying athletes celebrated or raged on Lillehammer's ice and snow, "President Juan Antonio Samaranch headed for a real war zone — Sarajevo, the shattered site of the 1984 Winter Olympics."

During his visit to Bosnia, Samaranch wants "to renew the call for the 'Olympic truce'" the IOC said. Samaranch previously had urged Bosnia's warring factions to observe a cease-fire during the Feb. 12-27 Lillehammer Games.

On the third day of the games, the first gold medal went to Hackl, a 27-year-old Bavarian who began sledging at age 10. Supporters hoisted

him to their shoulders as his arch-rival Austria's Markus Prock — faded by a breath on the last of four runs in the two-day men's single event. The German's margin of victory was the equivalent of 13 inches (32.5 centimetres).

In the men's 30-kilometre freestyle, the 22-year-old Alsgaard left the starting line as an Olympic novice and finished a star, beating one of the favourites — countryman Bjorn Dablie — for the gold. Dablie, triple gold medalist at Albertville, France, two years ago, took silver. Bronze went to Finland's Mika Myllyla.

Golubev's time of 36.33 seconds in the 500 broke the old Olympic speedskating mark of 36.45 set by Uwe-Jens Mey of the former East Germany at Calgary in 1988.

Another Russian, Sergei Klevchenya also bested Mey's mark, winning the silver medal in 36.39. Manabu Horii of Japan won bronze in 36.53.

Jansen, who holds the world record of 35.76 and every other speedskating honour except an Olympic medal, slipped coming out of the turn and had to brace himself against the ice with his left hand. His time of 36.68 put him well out of medal contention.

"It's a bit of a shock to me," Jansen said. "I'm not making excuses, but it's not a place I've slipped before... I would have won by quite a bit if I didn't slip."

Jansen's wife, Robin, was in the stands with several family

members. She couldn't bear to watch after her husband's misstep.

"As soon as I slip, I said, 'Why God, again? God can't be cruel, she said. "I'm sure day we'll find out. One day we'll understand."

Despite his red-setting performances, the world Cup competition, the American champion continues to be haunted by an Olympic jinx. Six years ago this very date, his sister Jane Jansen Beres died of leukemia while Jansen was readying to compete at the Calgary Games. Then followed two Olympic falls in 1988 and two failures to medal at Albertville four years later.

Probably his last medal chance will come in Friday's 1,000 metres race.

Host Norway, which already has won two gold and three silver medals to lead the Lillehammer medal race, was given new hope for an Alpine victory as Lasse Jjus took Monday's downhill portion of the men's combined. He edged American Americans Kyle Rasmussen and Tommy Moe, gold medalist in Sunday's downhill.

At Lillehammer's Haakon ice hockey arena, a veteran German team outclassed a less experienced Norwegian six, 2-1. Germany went to 2-0 and the host Norwegians to 0-2 in Olympic pool play.

In other Hockey play Monday, the Czech republic faced Austria, and the favoured Russians were pitted against the Finns, 3-1 upset winners over the Czechs on opening day.

German luger Hackl began the third day of the games leading Prock by one-hundredth of a second, then fell behind by .48 of a second in the third run. But Prock faltered on the final run and finished .013 of a second behind Hackl.

World record wiped out

BIRMINGHAM, England (AP) — Colin Jackson equalled, but did not break, the world indoor 60-metre hurdles record over the weekend. British track officials said Monday.

A review of the photo-finish judge Raymond Hutchinson in Monday's edition of the Times, came when he had only a rushed look at the print before the time was announced at the meet.

Saturday. The difference was enough to round the Briton's time up to 7.36, instead of 7.35, to tie American Gres Foster's seven-year-old mark.

The error, said photo-finish judge Raymond Hutchinson in Monday's edition of the Times, came when he had only a rushed look at the print before the time was announced at the meet.

Martin wins ATP event

MEMPHIS, Tennessee (AFP) — Todd Martin, runner-up at last month's Australian Open, went one step better to beat fellow-American Brad Gilbert 6-4, 7-5 in Sunday's \$800,000 Memphis ATP tournament.

Martin, ranked ninth in the world, won the second prize of his career and the \$110,500 first prize, by beating the two-time former champion 6-4, 7-5 in the final.

Twelve months ago Martin lost to Jim Courier in his first ATP final but he was saved from a rematch when the 39th-ranked Gilbert beat the world number-three in the quarter-finals.

Martin, beaten by Pete Sampras in the Australian Open final last month, outscored Gilbert and scored a big percentage of his points off Gilbert's second serves.

In the second-set Gilbert broke to lead 4-3, but Martin stormed back immediately and

went on to snatch victory on a Gilbert double-fault.

Gilbert has now lost seven straight finals since his last ATP triumph in 1990.

After his win Martin, who had lost five straight finals since winning at Coral Springs, Florida, last May said: "It's nice to complete the job this time."

"Brad lulls you to sleep with the softness of his balls. But when you make him hit a shot, he hits it hard and accurately. When you're even or ahead, he lulls you to sleep more. Whenever I was behind, I felt more intensity."

"I knew I would be at net more than he would be. I knew I had to be patient and when I had the chance to come in, I needed to hit a good approach shot and a good volley."

Gilbert said: "I wanted to slow him down because he likes the pace but my serve let me down. His future is looking really good. If he were a stock, you would want to buy some."

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSHI

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ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠K764 ♣A9 07 ♦1098742
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1♣ 3♦ ?

A.—Weak
What do you bid now?
A.—Had East passed you would probably have jumped to four spades, so why not make the same bid now? The problem with three spades is it doesn't sound all that invitational and could be made on a more balanced hand. Don't put pressure on partner. Take a shot at game.

Q.2—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠A9 ♣K97 ♦A185 ♣QJ4
Partner opens the bidding with one heart. What do you respond?
A.—There's a textbook bid that describes a perfectly balanced hand of 16-18 points with stoppers in the unbid suits. It's a jump to three no trump. Make it.

Q.3—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠1085 ♣AQ432 ♣Q ♠A102
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1♣ Pass 3NT Pass ?

A.—If you treated your hand as a minimum and tamely corrected to four hearts, you are undervaluing its trick-taking potential. With a known nine-card fit, we would make a gentle move by cue-bidding four clubs, intending to venture no further than four hearts next, if we still have room for that bid.

Q.4—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠KQ4 ♣87 ♦AK874 ♠1065
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1♣ Pass 2♦ Pass ?

A.—The auction has developed awkwardly. You can't rebid diamonds or support hearts, you have no second suit and, with the club suit unstopped, any no-trump bid is out of the question. The solution is to lie a little and show your strong holding in spades, hoping partner will be able to bid no trump. Two spades is the least of evils.

Q.5—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠AK984 ♣110643 ♣K3 ♠6
Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one club. What action do you take?
A.—If a cue-bid of two clubs specifically shows both majors and a hand of limited strength, this is not the holding for that bid—it is too strong defensively. Overall one spade and hope you get the opportunity to show your hearts later. Don't make a takeout double—that action is not recommended on a two-suited hand.

Q.6—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠KQ9 ♣A10842 ♠103 ♠A94
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1♣ Pass 1♦ Pass ?

A.—The choice lies between one no trump and two spades. With a weak doubleton in one suit and superb three-card support for partner's suit, the raise to two spades stands out by the proverbial mile.

PARIS (AFP) — Europe's top teams came under relentless pressure over the weekend.

Johan Cruyff's Barcelona were left shell-shocked after crashing to a 6-3 defeat at Real Zaragoza.

Bayern Munich threw away their chance of catching leaders Eintracht Frankfurt when they were inexplicably beaten 3-1 at home by modest Stuttgart.

Only eight first division teams managed to reach the last sixteen of the French Cup competition.

And while spurs, went on goal-scoring spree AC Milan found themselves struggling to score a 1-0 home win against Cremonese — a team reduced to ten players.

Barcelona's humiliation began when Real Zaragoza slotted home four goals in a confidence-destroying first-half. Argentinian Fernando Caceres was on target for the home side in the fifth minute. Jose Gay made it 2-0 a quarter

of an hour later and Juan Esnaisider had scored two more before the break.

Barcelona's Brazilian Front-runner Romario had scored for the visitors in the 31st minute and things looked fractionally brighter when Denmark's Michael Laudrup cut the arrears further. But Gran-cisco Higueras and Uruguayan Gustavo Poyet added more goals before Romario scored his second goal of the match.

Meanwhile Real Madrid, themselves in crisis only a week ago and with coach Benito Floro facing the axe, leap-frogged Cruyff's men into second place with a 1-0 win over Real Oviedo.

That win follows last week's 2-0 triumph over league leaders Deportivo la Coruna, who themselves bounced back Sunday by beating Sevilla 2-0. Beto scoring one minute before the break and Fran a minute after.

Deportivo are now on 34

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	Jane Fonda — in OLD GRINGO Shows: 12.30, 3, 8.30, 10.30	Stallone...in CLIFFHANGER Show: 12.30, 3.40, 6.30, 8.30, 10.30	CONCORD '1' Last Action Hero Shows: 12.30, 3, 8.30, 10.30 CONCORD '2' Batman Returns Shows: 12.30, 3.	presents a play entitled: AL Him Nuron A popular political comedy Actors: Abber Issa, Daoud Jalal, Hassan Al Sheer, Foad Shomali in addition to other comedians Every night at 8:15 Tickets are sold all day	Nabil and Hisham Theatre presents Ahlan Arab Summit Conference (play) daily at 8:30 p.m. Theatre is closed Mondays and Tuesdays

مكتبة العصر

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ghali to meet Assad today

GENEVA (R) — United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Ghali will discuss the stalled Middle East peace process with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad in Geneva on Saturday, U.N. officials said. "Boutros Ghali will meet Assad on Saturday afternoon," an official at the U.N. European headquarters said on Friday. The meeting between the U.N. chief, an Egyptian, and the Syrian president will take place a day before a summit in Geneva between Mr. Assad and U.S. President Bill Clinton. (see page 2)

Zhirinovskiy in angry clash at buffet

MOSCOW (R) — Russia's ultra-nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy was struck in the face in an angry clash in the buffet of the country's new parliament on Friday over who should be served first, witnesses said. Deputy Bela Denisenko said she gave Mr. Zhirinovskiy first aid after he was hit by a Mark Goryachev, a deputy with a long history of animosity towards the Liberal Democrat leader. Mr. Zhirinovskiy was apparently not seriously hurt. Witnesses told Reuters a heated row broke out when Mr. Goryachev, who had been waiting some time for service in the canteen, was incensed by the sight of waiters running to attend Mr. Zhirinovskiy as soon as he entered the room. "Remarks were exchanged and the two men approached each other closely in an angry frame of mind," one witness said. Interfax quoted a witness as saying Mr. Zhirinovskiy screamed at Mr. Goryachev: "Get out of here while you're in one piece." TASS said Mr. Zhirinovskiy, borne to electoral success in December's elections to the newly-created Duma, told Mr. Goryachev he would be the first to be jailed when he came to power. Critics brand Mr. Zhirinovskiy a fascist. He denies the charge.

Bhutto accuses mother of 'male prejudice'

NEW YORK (AFP) — Pakistan's Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto rejected her mother's demand to be restored to the leadership of Pakistan's ruling party, accusing her of siding with her son out of "male prejudice." The New York Times said Friday. "I have fought too long to save the party from general (Mohammad) Zia and all my father's opponents to let my own family, in a fit of male prejudice, undermine or destroy it," she said in an interview from Islamabad with the newspaper. She said she ousted her mother, Nusrat Bhutto, from the leadership of the Pakistan People's Party because of her insistence that Mir Murtaza Bhutto, the brother who was then in exile in Syria, run in more than 20 constituencies as an anti-organisation candidate in elections last October.

U.S. report condemns Peres over scandal

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A U.S. report has strongly criticised Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres for his role in the sale of arms to Iran in the 1980s, the Israeli daily Haaretz reported Friday. The report by U.S. special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh, due to be published soon, criticises the then Prime Minister Peres especially for his connections with two Israelis directly involved in the arms-for-hostages scheme — his relative Al Schimmer and businessman Yaakov Nimrod. The report also criticises the current prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, who was defence minister at the time. Haaretz said a special advisor to Mr. Rabin, reserve General Rafael Vardul, had been given the task of preparing Israel's response to the charges contained in the report.

Russia, Israel in crime fight pact

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia and Israel have agreed to cooperate in fighting organised crime, under an agreement signed here by their interior ministers. Itar-Tass news agency reported Friday. A key provision is to post liaison officers in each country "to avoid lengthy bureaucratic procedures," said Russian Interior Minister Viktor Yerin. His Israeli counterpart Moshe Shahal denied that a Russian mafia was expanding its activities in Israel, as Russian press reports have said lately. Russian immigrants gave the police no more trouble than others, he said.

France pleads for Iranian priest

PARIS (AFP) — France on Friday pleaded for the life of Iranian Christian priest Mehdi Dibaj, 59, threatened with execution for converting to Christianity from Islam. Lucette Michaux-Chevri, minister-delegate for humanitarian affairs and human rights, appealed to Iranian authorities through the French embassy in Tehran on behalf of Mr. Dibaj, who was to have been hanged this Friday for apostasy. Mr. Michaux-Chevri expressed the French government's "emotion" over Mr. Dibaj's sentence and deplored persecution of Iran's religious minorities. The Dibaj case was publicised Thursday by the Evangelical group open doors which said Mr. Dibaj had converted to Christianity 4 years ago at the age of 19. Under Sharia law, enforced in Iran since 1979, any Muslim apostate is liable to the death penalty.

Bombay doctor arrested for train blast

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Doctor from Bombay was among 13 people arrested for a series of train bombings on Dec. 6 which killed one person and injured 15 others, the Press Trust of India said Friday. Mohammad Jaleel Ansari, the alleged mastermind behind the blast, which coincided with the first anniversary of the racing of the Babri Mosque by Hindu fanatics in Ayodhya, was arrested in downtown Bombay, police said. They said 12 other people, including Dr. Ansari's brother Mohammad Likayat Syeduddin, were arrested after joint raids on several hideouts in Bombay and the northern city of Lucknow by police and the federal Central Bureau of Investigation. Several sophisticated explosives, detonators and revolvers were found in Dr. Ansari's office in Bombay's Agripada district, a spokesman said. The doctor allegedly had links with Pakistani intelligence and had passed on "vital" information.

Carey launches appeal for Sudan

LONDON (R) — The spiritual head of the Church of England launched an appeal Friday to provide food and medicines to Sudan following his controversial visit to the divided country. "I came back very moved by the plight of the people I saw and I decided to launch an ecumenical appeal," the archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. George Carey, said on BBC Radio Four's Today programme. Cardinal Basil Hume, head of the Catholic Church in Britain, and other church leaders were also cooperating in the project. Sudan expelled Britain's ambassador after Archbishop Carey declined to visit the capital, Khartoum, and confined his trip earlier this month to the rebel-held south where most of Sudan's Christians live. Britain ordered Sudan's envoy out in retaliation.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING CORPORATION

The Vocational Training Corporation announces that its headquarter offices have moved from Abdali to Bayader Wadi Seer (8th Circle), near the Mechanic and Public Works Department (towards the airport road). The VTC's numbers have become as follows: Tel. 812181, 817181, 861462, 861463. Telefax: 24294, Fax: 820351, P.O. Box 825837, 141104

Afghan foes use jets to pound each other

KABUL (Agencies) — Afghan state and rival faction jets bombed each other's positions in Kabul on Friday, prior to a fierce artillery duel that raged four hours non-stop in the eastern suburbs of the capital.

Lone jets of faction leader, ex-communist General Abdul Rashid Dostum, made at least three sorties over Kabul Friday — shortly after midnight, and around 5:00 a.m. (0030 GMT) and 8:30 a.m. local time — while a state jet was said to have bombed Dostum bases at 9:30 a.m.

A lone jet again circled Kabul at 2:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. but with the prevailing artillery bombardment it was difficult to tell which faction it belonged to, and where it dropped its bomb load.

In the nighttime Dostum raids the Kabul sky was illuminated by streaming arcs of scarlet tracer fire as Defence Ministry anti-aircraft guns sprayed cannon shells at the attacker, which at midnight locals say dropped a deadly cluster-bomb on the dormant capital.

The military duty officer at Kabul airport said the Dostum jet raids were not effective against bases manned by forces loyal to President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

"These raids are designed to weaken the morale of the civilians. They cannot inflict heavy

casualties on our military forces," said duty officer General Mohammad Sajar Ayubzai.

A Russian-trained jet pilot himself, Gen. Ayubzai claimed Gen. Dostum's main airbases in Mazar-e-Sharif and Shebarghan in northern Afghanistan had been knocked out by pro-Rabbani jets.

He said Gen. Dostum had only two or three Russian-made Sukhoi Su-22 jets that were operational, and which take off from a makeshift desert runway near Shebarghan, the capital of Gen. Dostum's native Jawzjan province.

More than 4,000 people have been wounded and an estimated 400 killed since the fighting exploded Jan. 1 in the Afghan capital.

Little ground has been won or lost, and none of the factions appears capable of delivering a decisive blow. The factions have been battling for control of the capital since 1992, when they ousted a communist government.

They have killed some 10,000 people, destroyed much of the city, and kept Kabul's hospitals overflowing.

More than half of Afghan's doctors are believed to have left the country during the 14-year-war. Those that have remained have proved remarkably dedicated, working endless hours for little pay.

Yemeni tribe releases 2 kidnapped Westerners

SANAA (Agencies) — A Briton and a Canadian held hostage by tribesmen in North Yemen for 12 days were released Friday, the general manager of the Yemen-Hunt Oil Co. said.

George Slaughter said the two men — 49-year-old Peter Jackson from Exeter, England, and 43-year-old George Hawkins from Vancouver, Canada — were released along with their helicopter at around 3 p.m. (1200 GMT).

Mr. Hawkins piloted the helicopter back to Sanaa, according to Mr. Slaughter.

"They looked tired, which is understandable as they've been under strain, but they have been treated as best as could be possible under the

circumstances," Mr. Slaughter told the Association Press in a telephone interview.

Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jackson and four Yemeni employees were kidnapped Jan. 3 by Khawlan tribesmen in a desolate region of northern Yemen.

They were seized when they flew to the region to investigate a pipeline bombing, apparently carried out to lure Westerners into a trap.

The Yemenis were immediately freed, but they stayed with the two Westerners, one shutting back and forth with the tribe's demands.

Led by Sheikh Ahmad Ali Shudadi, the tribe was demanding fees for the pipeline to be spent on more services, such as schools and medical clinics,



An elderly Afghan seeks cover with his 14-month-old nephew as rival forces Friday continued fierce battles in Kabul (AFP photo)

Most international groups, including the United Nations, have pulled out due to the danger. But the international committee for the Red Cross,

based in Geneva, and Medecins sans Frontieres (Doctors without Borders), based in Brussels, have remained on the job.

from the central government. However, diplomats believed the abductions were more likely politically motivated.

Mr. Slaughter said no demands were directly made to his company, a subsidiary of the Dallas-based Hunt Oil Co., and the negotiations had gone on between the authorities and the kidnappers.

Representatives of Yemen Hunt were on site with the Yemeni authorities, meeting any needs of the two men.

Journalists who visited the site reported that the two men were guarded by 30 to 40 Yemeni tribesmen, some of whom brandished Kalashnikov assault rifles. While in captivity, the two men said they were being moved from village to village.

Mr. Slaughter said he did not know what the authorities had promised the kidnappers, if anything, to secure the release of the two men and did not expect to find out on Friday.

"We don't know the circumstances of their release. We'll find out later," he said. "We were not involved with any negotiations."

Mr. Jackson and Mr. Hawkins arrived in the capital along with two Yemenis, who were held with them in Al Ayama, in the Maareb region some 100 kilometres east of Sanaa.

Several other foreigners have been abducted in recent months by tribes trying to cope with serious economic and political problems.

Egyptian cleric calls plot informer 'Satan'

NEW YORK (R) — Blind and unable to speak more than a few words of English, Egyptian cleric Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman is adamant these days about acting as his own lawyer in his U.S. bombing and assassination conspiracy trial.

In an interview at the federal prison where he is being held, the man accused of wanting to blow up the United Nations and taking part in a conspiracy to kill Egyptian leader Hosni Mubarak says he wants nothing more than to cross-examine his chief accuser when the trial starts next September.

The accuser is informant Emad Salem, whom Sheikh Abdul Rahman calls "Satan." He says he wants to guide Mr. Salem "to the truth" and he spends hours in his cell going over tape transcripts of Mr. Salem's taped conversations with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), looking for lies and clues to Mr. Salem's "materialism" and betrayals of Islam.

The cleric says he wants no

harm to come to Mr. Salem, denying the informer's claim that the sheikh has issued a fatwa to his followers to kill him.

"I pray for Emad Salem to have a long life. He just makes up stories about me unjustly," the sheikh said, adding, "It is a duty that people stay away from him. They should take away his children. If he has a Muslim wife she should leave him."

He adds that Mr. Salem has strayed from Islam, lied to Allah and made a mockery out of the Koran. Salem is Satan, an infidel.

The federal judge in the case denied the sheikh's request to have activist lawyer William Kunstler represent him and he decided to act as his own attorney rather than pay the \$250,000 another lawyer was asking.

Sheikh Abdul Rahman, 55, made his comments through an Arabic translator during a two-hour interview with Reuters at the Manhattan federal prison

Wednesday where he and 14 others are being held awaiting trial in September.

Four of his alleged followers are already on trial for setting off bombs at the World Trade Centre last February, killing six people and injuring 1,000. The cleric has denied involvement in that or in any conspiracy or murder plot.

Mr. Salem, 43, is credited with helping the FBI foil what the government said was a plot to blow up the United Nations, tunnels and the federal building housing the FBI in New York.

A former Egyptian army officer and intelligence agent, Mr. Salem secretly taped-recorded his conversations with all the defendants and his conversations with FBI agents.

Sheikh Abdul Rahman strongly denied Mr. Salem's claims that he "solicited" the informer in late 1991 "to murder the president of Egypt," Hosni Mubarak.

"This is a big lie, just as he made another lie in which he

said I gave a fatwa to bomb the United Nations. Why would I ask Salem to murder Mubarak when other Muslims had already warned me in 1991 that Salem was a spy sent by Egyptian intelligence?" the cleric asked.

The sheikh promised "a big surprise for everybody" at the trial. "I will talk about bombs," he said without elaboration.

Sheikh Abdul Rahman says the Salem transcripts back up his contention that the government knew in advance of the bombing of the World Trade Centre. "Have you seen the bomb that blew up? And both of you know that I'm very sad because we wasted millions of dollars," Sheikh Abdul Rahman quotes Mr. Salem as telling his FBI handlers on March 6.

Sheikh Abdul Rahman said he wants to prove at his trial that Islam is not a "terrorist" religion.

Somali clan leaders continue peace talks

MOGADISHU (AFP) —

Peace talks between clansmen of factional leader Mohammad Farah Aideded and those of his enemy, self-styled President Ali Mahdi Mohammad, went into a second day here Friday.

General Aideded, meanwhile, continued negotiations in the Kenyan capital Nairobi with representatives of the group of 12 factions led by Mr. Ali Mahdi that oppose him.

The United Nations, heavily criticised for getting peacekeepers embroiled in clashes with Gen. Aideded's militia that cost the lives of more than 70 U.N. soldiers, was officially involved in neither the Nairobi, nor the Mogadishu talks.

But Gen. Aideded has met U.N. envoy Richard Bogosian in Nairobi, an American official in Mogadishu said.

Ahmad Darman, a member of the central committee of Gen. Aideded's Somali National Alliance (SNA) faction, urged the U.N. to arrange another national reconciliation conference to bring Somalia's warring factions together.

But he said the U.N. should stop meddling in negotiations and leave the Somalis to work out a settlement without outside interference.

"We hope the Nairobi talks will pave the way for a national reconciliation conference which might be held in Mogadishu," Mr. Darman told reporters.

About 175 members of Gen. Aideded's Habr Gedir clan and Mr. Ali Mahdi's Abgal group held a second day of closed-door talks at the Kah Hotel in Mr. Ali Mahdi's north Mogadishu enclave Friday.

Chaired by a prominent Islamic leader, the imam of Hirab, the meeting brought together traditional clan chiefs, religious leaders, military officers and leaders of youth groups, conference officials said.

The negotiations were expected to announce the outcome of the talks, which were preceded by a month of informal consultations, when they end Saturday.

Senior U.N. officials who were privately sceptical about previous attempts to broker agreements among Somalia's 15 warring clan-based factions said they sensed a greater willingness by the warlords to lay down their arms.

"They are under pressure from their own rank and file," said one U.N. official.

"The warlords themselves have done well out of the fighting, but the fighters are tired."

Gen. Aideded's faction is estimated to have lost hundreds of men in four months of fighting with U.S. and U.N. forces in Mogadishu before the U.N. dropped efforts to arrest him in October.

In other developments, a U.N. spokesman said a Somali had been shot dead during an anti-U.N. protest in a coastal town south of Mogadishu.

U.N. officials had earlier said no one was killed and denied reports on pro-Aideded Radio Mogadishu that two people had died when a defence of the U.N. Operation in Somali (UNOSOM) in Merca, about 60 kilometres south-west here, turned violent.

COLUMN

Hillary, Chelsea Clinton arrive in Moscow

MOSCOW (R) — President Bill Clinton's wife Hillary and daughter Chelsea arrived Friday in Moscow where he is holding a summit with Russian leader Boris Yeltsin. ITAR-TASS news agency said. The two were met at Sheremetyevo Airport by Valentina Chernomyrdin, wife of Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin.

Clinton plays sax for Yeltsin

MOSCOW (R) — Amateur musician Bill Clinton played the saxophone for Russian President Boris Yeltsin during a three-hour dinner with a 24-course menu including exotic delicacies like lip of moose. For the second time on his six-nation, eight-day European tour, Mr. Clinton picked up a saxophone and played My Funny Valentine and Summer time, he played the same tunes in Prague for Czech Republic President Vaclav Havel. In another sign that President Clinton and President Yeltsin are getting along well, Mr. Yeltsin invited Clinton, his wife Hillary and 13-year-old daughter Chelsea to stay overnight in the Kremlin Friday. It will be the first time since 1972 that a U.S. president has stayed overnight in the Kremlin. Richard Nixon was the guest of Leonid Brezhnev back then during a summit to sign an arms control accord. There was plenty of serious business at the dinner at Mr. Yeltsin's dacha southeast of Moscow, but it turned to play when Mr. Yeltsin presented Mr. Clinton with a small, blue porcelain figurine of the U.S. leader. It showed Mr. Clinton with one hand raised, "signifying his status as a politician," and the other holding a saxophone, a senior U.S. official said. That turned the conversation to the saxophone and Mr. Yeltsin just happened to have one on hand. Mr. Clinton began tuning in one room while the string quartet playing in another room picked up his tune and they started an impromptu jam session after which Mr. Clinton played his two songs. The menu included fresh caviar, pickled mushrooms, stuffed carp, and lip of moose. "It was, uh, it was good. It was unusual," said the official. Was there any drinking? "Only symbolic and social and very much in the spirit of the event," said the official. On offer were vodka, wine and plenty of mineral water.

Duchess of York jokes about love and waistlines

HONG KONG (AP) — The Duchess of York joked about teenage romance and her waistline Thursday, and told runaway Hong Kong kids to "get on with life and really go with it." Looking tanned and relaxed during a brief visit to the British colony, she toured a home for runaways and provoked squeals of laughter from a group of teenage girls by asking: "What do you think of the boys?" One girl said she liked them, to which the duchess remarked: "Me too." Wearing a cream and dark blue suit, the duchess sipped tea but refused biscuits. "No thanks," she said, adding as she patted her hips: "too big already." The former Sarah Ferguson, estranged wife of Prince Andrew, urged the youngsters to get the most out of life, saying: "Just remember that there's great hope and it's a great world." Earlier, she visited a centre for Down's syndrome sufferers in Kowloon and was greeted with a bouquet of flowers, watched by about 100 onlookers who clapped and exclaimed "ho leus" — "she's very pretty." Asked by reporters if she was enjoying Hong Kong, she replied: "Very good, thank you." "The people are very nice and very welcoming," she said.

Mistrial declared in Beverly Hills murder case

LOS ANGELES (R) — A judge has declared a mistrial in the murder case against one of the two Menendez brothers who admitted killing their wealthy Beverly Hills parents. Superior Court Judge Stanley Weisberg made the ruling after a jury trying the case against Erik Menendez, 23, said for the third time it was hopelessly deadlocked.

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